

THE DIAL

AUGUST 1923

LEISURE AND MECHANISM

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TO any one who reflects upon industrialism it is clear that it requires, for its successful practice, somewhat different virtues from those that were required in a pre-industrial community. But there is, to my mind, wide-spread misapprehension as to the nature of those virtues, owing to the fact that moralists confine their survey to a short period of time, and are more interested in the success of the individual than in that of the race. There is also, in all conventional moralists, a gross ignorance of psychology, making them unable to realize that certain virtues imply certain correlated vices, so that in recommending a virtue the consideration which ought to weigh is: Does this virtue, with its correlative vice, outweigh the opposite virtue with its correlative vice? The fact that a virtue is good in itself is not enough; it is necessary to take account of the vices that it entails and the virtues that it excludes.

I shall define as virtues those mental and physical habits which tend to produce a good community, and as vices those that tend to produce a bad one. Different people have different conceptions of what makes a community good or bad, and it is difficult to find arguments by which to establish the preferability of one's own conception. I cannot hope, therefore, to appeal to those whose tastes are very different from my own, but I hope and believe that there is nothing very singular in my own tastes.

For my part, I should judge a community to be in a good state if I found a great deal of instinctive happiness, a prevalence of feelings of friendship and affection rather than hatred and envy, a

capacity for creating and enjoying beauty, and the intellectual curiosity which leads to the advancement and diffusion of knowledge. I should judge a community to be in a bad state if I found much unhappiness from thwarted instinct, much hatred and envy, little sense of beauty, and little intellectual curiosity. As between these different elements of excellence or the reverse, I do not pretend to judge. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that intellectual curiosity and artistic capacity were found to be in some degree incompatible, I should find it difficult to say which ought to be preferred. But I should certainly think better of a community which contained something of both than of one which contained more of the one and none of the other. I do not, however, believe that there is any incompatibility among the four ingredients I have mentioned as constituting a good community, namely: happiness, friendship, enjoyment of beauty, and love of knowledge.

It is to be observed that we do not define as a virtue merely what leads to these good things for its possessor, but what leads to them for the community to which he belongs. For different purposes, the community that has to be considered is different. In the case of acts which have little effect outside the family, the family will be the community concerned. In the official actions of a mayor, the community concerned will be the municipality; in internal politics it will be the nation, and in foreign politics the world. Theoretically, it is always the whole world that is concerned; practically, the effects outside some limited circle are often negligible.

However moralists may recommend altruism, all the moral exhortations that have had wide-spread effects have appealed to purely selfish desires. Buddhism urged virtue on the ground that it led to nirvana; Christianity, on the ground that it led to heaven. In each of these great religions, virtue was that line of conduct which would be pursued by a prudent egoist. Neither of these, however, has much influence on the practical morality of our own time. For energetic people, the moral code of our time is that of "success"—the code which my generation learnt in childhood from Smiles' *Self-help* and which modern young men learn from efficiency experts. In this code, "success" is defined as the acquisition of a large income. According to this code, it is wicked for a young man to be late at the office, even if what has delayed him is fetching the doctor for a sudden illness of his child; but it is not wicked to oust a competitor by well-timed tale-bearing. Competition,

hard work, and rigid self-control are demanded by this code; its rewards are dyspepsia and unutterable boredom, in all who have not a quite exceptional physique. By comparison with its votaries, St Simeon Stylites was a voluptuary; nevertheless they, like him, are pure egoists.

In sociology, we are concerned with men in the mass, not with rare and exceptional individuals. It is possible for a few saints to live a life which is in part unselfish, but it does not appear to be possible for the vast majority of mankind. The study of psychology, and more particularly of psychoanalysis, has torn aside the cloaks that our egoism wears, and has shown that when we think we are being unselfish, this is hardly ever in fact the case. It would therefore be useless to preach a morality which required unselfishness on the part of any large number of men. I do not think myself that there is any need to do so. Our natural impulses, properly directed and trained, are, I believe, capable of producing a good community, provided praise and blame are wisely apportioned.

It is through the operation of praise and blame that the positive morality of a community becomes socially effective. We all like praise and dislike blame; moreover, rewards and punishments often accompany them. "Positive morality"—i. e. the habit of attaching praise to certain types of behaviour and blame to certain other types—has enormous influence on conduct. In Somaliland, and formerly among the aborigines of Formosa, a man was not thought sufficiently manly to deserve a wife until he had killed someone; in fact, he was expected to bring the head of his victim to the wedding ceremony. The result was that even the mildest and gentlest of men, in obedience to the moral sense of the community, felt obliged to practise homicide. This custom is rapidly dying out among savages, but among the white races the same feeling persists as regards military service in wartime. Thus in spite of the egoism of human nature, the positive morality of neighbours forces men into conduct quite different from that which they would pursue if positive morality were different; they even often sacrifice their lives for fear of being blamed. Positive morality is therefore a very tremendous power. I believe that at present it is quite unadapted to industrialism, and that it will have to be radically changed if industrialism is to survive.

There is one point in which the definition of virtue and vice given above departs from tradition and from common practice.

We defined a virtue as a habit which tends to produce a good community, and a vice as one which tends to produce a bad community. In thus judging by results, we agreed in one important respect with the utilitarian school of moralists, among whom Bentham and the two Mills were the most eminent. The traditional view is different; it holds that certain specified classes of actions are vicious, and that abstinence from all these is virtue. It is wicked to murder or steal (except on a large scale); it is wicked to speak ill of those in power, from the Deity to the policeman; above all, it is wicked to have sexual intercourse outside marriage. These prohibitions may, in our degenerate age, be defended by utilitarian arguments, but in some cases—e. g. refusal of divorce for insanity—the utilitarian arguments are very far-fetched, and are obviously not what is really influencing the minds of those who use them. What is influencing their minds is the view that certain classes of acts are "wicked," quite independently of their consequences. I regard this view as superstitious, but it would take us too far from our theme to argue the question here. I shall therefore assume, without more ado, that actions are to be judged by the results to be expected from actions of that kind, and not by some supposed *a priori* moral code. I do not mean—what would be obviously impracticable—that we should habitually calculate the effects of our actions. What I mean is that, in deciding what sort of moral instruction should be given to the young, or what sort of actions should be punished by the criminal law, we should do our best to consider what sort of actions will promote or hinder the general well-being. It might also seem as if this were a platitude. Yet a tremendous change would be effected if this platitude were acted upon. Our education, our criminal law, and our standards of praise and blame, would become completely different from what they are at present. How they would be altered, I shall now try to show.

Let us consider one by one the four kinds of excellence which we mentioned, beginning with instinctive happiness.

INSTINCTIVE HAPPINESS. I mean by this the sort of thing that is diminished by ill-health and destroyed by a bad liver, the kind of delight in life which one finds always more strongly developed in the young of any mammalian species than in the old. I doubt whether there is anything else that makes as much difference to the value of life from the point of view of the person who has to

live it. Those who have instinctive delight in life are happy except when they have positive causes of unhappiness; those who do not have it are unhappy except when they have positive causes of happiness. Moreover outward causes of happiness have more effect upon those who delight in life, while those who do not are more affected by outward causes of unhappiness. Of all personal goods, delight in life is therefore the greatest; and it is a condition for many others. I do not deny that it can be too dearly purchased, if it is obtained at the cost of injustice and stupidity. In the advanced industrial nations, apart from the agricultural population, I can think of only one small class that lives so as to preserve it, namely, the male portion of the British upper class. The public schools develop a boy's physique at the expense of his intelligence and sympathy; in this way, by the help of a good income, he often succeeds in preserving instinctive happiness. But the system is essentially aristocratic, so that it cannot be regarded as in any degree a contribution to the solution of our problem. Our problem is to preserve instinctive happiness for the many, not only for a privileged few.

The causes of instinctive happiness could best be set forth by a medical man, but without medical knowledge observation makes it easy to see broadly what they are. Physical health and vigour come first, but are obviously not alone sufficient. It is necessary to have scope for instinctive desires, and also for instinctive needs which often exist without corresponding explicit desires. Very few adults, whether men or women, can preserve instinctive happiness in a state of celibacy; this applies even to those women who have no conscious desire for sexual satisfaction. On this point, the evidence of psychoanalysis may be taken as conclusive. Many women and some men need also to have children sooner or later. To most men, some kind of progressive career is important; both to men and women, a certain amount of occupation imposed by necessity, not chosen for its pleasurable quality, is necessary for the avoidance of boredom. But too much work and too little leisure are more destructive of instinctive happiness than too little work and too much leisure. Another essential is the right amount of human companionship, neither too much nor too little; but as to what is the right amount, people vary greatly. Our instinctive nature seems to be fairly adapted to the hunting stage, as may be seen from the passion of rich men for shooting big game, killing

birds, and careering after foxes. In the hunting stage, men had periods of violent exertion alternating with complete quiescence, while women had activities which were more continuous, but less strenuous and less exciting. This probably accounts for the fact that men are more prone to gambling than women. One result of adaptation to the hunting stage is that most people like loud noise at times of excitement, alternating with silence at other times. In modern industrial life the noise is continuous, and this certainly has a debilitating nervous effect. I believe that almost everyone has a need (though often not a desire) for the sights and smells of the country. The delight of slum children on a country holiday is of a kind that points to the satisfaction of an instinctive need which urban life cannot supply. In recovering from a dangerous illness, the pleasure of being still alive consists mainly in joy in sunshine and the smell of rain and other such sensations familiar to primitive man.

The difference between needs and desires is important in the consideration of instinctive happiness. Our desires are mainly for things which primitive man did not get without difficulty: food and drink (especially the latter) leadership of the tribe, improvements in the methods of hunting and fighting. But we have many needs which are not associated with desires, because under primitive conditions these needs were always satisfied. Such are the needs of country sensations, of occasional silence and occasional solitude, of alternations of excitement and quiescence. To some extent, sex and maternity in women come under this head, because in a primitive community men see to the satisfaction of these feminine needs without any necessity for female co-operation. *Per contra*, there are desires which do not correspond to instinctive needs. The most important of these are the desires for drugs, including alcohol and tobacco. The fact that these desires are so readily stimulated by habit is an example of natural maladjustment from a Darwinian point of view. They differ from instinctive needs in two ways. First, from the point of view of survival, their satisfaction is not biologically useful; drugs do not help a man either to survive, himself, or to have a numerous progeny. Secondly, from the psychological point of view, the craving that they satisfy depends upon the habit of taking them, not upon a pre-existent need. The instinctive dissatisfaction which leads a man to take to drink is usually something wholly unconnected

with alcohol, such as business worries or disappointment in love. Drugs are a substitute for the thing instinctively needed, but an unsatisfactory substitute, because they never bring full instinctive satisfaction.¹

With the advance of what is called civilization, our social and material environment has changed faster than our instincts, so that there has been an increasing discrepancy between the acts to which we are impelled by instinct and those to which we are constrained by prudence. Up to a point, this is quite unavoidable. Murder, robbery, and rape are actions which may be prompted by instinct, but an orderly society must repress them. Work, especially when many are employed in one undertaking, requires regularity, which is utterly contrary to our untrained nature. And although a man who followed his impulses in a state of nature would (at least in a cold climate) do a good deal of work in the course of an average day, yet it is very rare indeed that a man has any spontaneous impulse to the work which he has to do in a modern industrial community. He works for the sake of the pay, not because he likes the work. There are of course exceptions: artists, inventors, men of learning, healthy mothers who have few children and strong maternal instincts, people in positions of authority, a small percentage of sailors and peasants. But the exceptions are not sufficiently numerous to be an important section of the whole. The irksomeness of work has no doubt always existed since men took to agriculture; it is mentioned in Genesis as a curse, and heaven has always been imagined as a place where no one does any work. But industrial methods have certainly made work more remote from instinct, and have destroyed the joy in craftsmanship which gave handicraftsmen something of the satisfaction of the artist. I do not think that, if industrial methods survive, we can hope to make the bulk of necessary work pleasant. The best we can hope is to diminish its amount, but there is no doubt that its amount could be diminished very greatly. It is chiefly in this direction that we must look for a lessening of the instinctive dissatisfaction involved in work.

A "return to nature," such as Rousseau's disciples dreamt of, is not possible without a complete break-up of our civilization. Regimentation, especially, is of the very essence of industrialism, which

¹ I do not wish this to be regarded as an argument for prohibition, to which on the whole I am opposed.

would necessarily perish without it. If this is an evil, and is unavoidable, our aim must be to have as little of it as is possible. This aim will be realized by making the hours of industrial labour as short as is compatible with the production of necessities, and leaving the remaining hours of the day entirely untrammelled. Four hours' boredom a day is a thing which most people could endure; and this is probably about what would be required.

In many other respects, the restraints upon instinct which now exist could be greatly diminished. Production at present has two correlative defects: that it is competitive, and that it is thought important to produce as much as possible. A great deal less work is required now to produce a given amount of goods than was required before the industrial revolution, and yet people live at higher pressure than they did then. This is chiefly due to competition. An immense amount of labour is wasted in getting orders and securing markets. At times when there is a great deal of unemployment, those who are not unemployed are overworked, because otherwise employers could not make a profit. The competitive management of industry for profit is the source of the trouble. For the same reason there is a desire to maximize production, because, with industrial methods, the production of immense quantities of a commodity is more capable of yielding a profit than the production of moderate quantities.¹ The whole urgency of the modern business world is towards speeding up, greater efficiency, more intense international competition, when it ought to be towards more ease, less hurry, and combination to produce goods for use rather than profit. Competition, since the industrial revolution, is an anachronism, leading inevitably to all the evils of the modern world.

The sense of strain, which is characteristic of all grades in an industrial community from the highest to the lowest, is due to instinctive maladjustment. Every kind of failure to satisfy deep instinctive needs produces strain, but the manifestations are somewhat different according to the instinct which is thwarted. The chief needs thwarted by industrialism, as at present conducted, are: the need of spontaneous and variable activities, the need of occasional quiet and solitude, and the need of contact with the earth. This applies to the working classes, but in the middle

¹ Cf. R. Austin Freeman, *Social Decay and Regeneration* (Constable 1921) especially pages 105-127.

classes the thwarting of instinct is much more serious. A man who has any ambition cannot marry young, must be very careful how he has children, must if possible marry a girl whose father will help him professionally rather than a girl he likes, and when married must avoid infidelity, except so furtively as not to be found out. Our society is so imbued with the belief that happiness consists in financial success that men do not realize how much they are losing, and how much richer their lives might be if they cared less for money. But the results of their instinctive dissatisfaction are all the worse for being unconscious. Middle-class men, when they are no longer quite young, are generally filled with envy: envy of their more successful colleagues, envy of the young, and (strange as it may seem) envy of working-men. The result of the first kind of envy is to make them hostile to all intellectual or artistic eminence until it is so well-established that they dare not challenge it; of the second, to make them rejoice in war because it gives them a chance to thwart the young who have to do the fighting; of the third, to make them politically opposed to everything calculated to benefit wage-earners, such as education, sanitation, maintenance during unemployment, knowledge of birth control (which the middle class practise as a matter of course) housing reform, and so on. They believe that their opposition to these measures is based on economy and a desire to keep down the taxes, but in this they deceive themselves, because they do not object to the spending of vastly greater sums on armaments and wars. The same man, often, will object to the education rate on the ground that the poor have larger families than the well-to-do, and to birth control on the ground that it is immoral and unnatural except for those whose income is fairly comfortable. Men are strangely unconscious of their passions, and the envy which dominates most middle-aged professional men is a thing of which they know nothing, though the methods of psychoanalysis reveal it unerringly.

The failure of instinctive satisfaction in the wage-earning classes is less profound than in the professional classes, because, whatever Marxians may say, they have more freedom in the really important matters, such as marriage. Of course this greater freedom is being rapidly diminished by improvement in police methods, and by the continual tightening up of the "moral" standard through the activities of thwarted middle-class busy-bodies. This has gone

so far that at present, in English law, the penalty for deserting a vindictive wife, if you are a wage-earner, is imprisonment for life.¹ In spite of this tendency, wage-earners, as yet, in good times, suffer less instinctive repression than professionals, because they are less dominated by respectability and snobbery. Nevertheless, the failure to satisfy instinctive needs is serious, particularly as regards spontaneity. The effect shows itself in love of excitement, thoughtless sentimentalism, and (in the more intelligent) hatred of richer people or of foreign nations.

It is evident that the first steps towards a cure for these evils are being taken by the trade unions, in those parts of their policy which are most criticized, such as restriction of output, refusal to believe that the only necessity is more production, shortening of hours, and so on. It is only by these methods that industrialism can be humanized and can realize the possibilities of good which are latent in it. It could be used to lighten physical labour, and to set men free for more agreeable activities. Hitherto, the competitive system has prevented its being so used. It should have made life more leisurely, but it has made it more hustling. Increase of leisure, diminution of hustle, are the ends to be sought, not mere quantitative increase of production. The trade unions have clearly perceived this, and have persisted in spite of lectures from every kind of middle- or upper-class pundit. This is one reason why there is more hope from self-government in industry than from State Socialism. The Bolsheviks, when they had established State Socialism, ranged themselves on the side of the worst capitalists on all the matters we have been considering. It is obvious that this must always be the case when conditions of work are determined bureaucratically by officials, instead of by the workers themselves.

FRIENDLY FEELING. It is impossible to find any single phrase to describe adequately the whole of what I wish to include under this head. I can, I think, best explain by avoiding hackneyed words

¹ This fact is not generally known. The mechanism is as follows: The Court makes an order for maintenance, the wife makes a scandal where the man is employed, he is dismissed, cannot pay the maintenance, and is imprisoned for contempt of Court. He is legally liable for maintenance even while in prison; therefore on the very day he comes out his wife can have him put back for not paying maintenance during the period of his first imprisonment. And so it goes on until he dies or she is glutted with vengeance. This is not a fancy picture, as any one who knows prisoners can testify.

which *seem* to convey the correct meaning, but in fact fail to do so. An average human being is indifferent to the good or evil fortune of most other human beings, but has an emotional interest in a certain number of his fellow-creatures. This interest may involve pleasure in their good fortune and pain in their evil fortune; or it may involve pain in their good fortune and pleasure in their evil fortune; or it may involve one of these attitudes in certain respects and the other in certain other respects. I shall call these three attitudes, friendly, hostile, and mixed, respectively. Broadly speaking, the second of the four goods which we wished to see realized in a community is the friendly attitude combined with as little as possible of the hostile attitude. But this is only a rough preliminary characterization of what I mean.

Biologically speaking, the purpose of life is to leave a large number of descendants. Our instincts, in the main, are such as would be likely to achieve this result in a rather uncivilized community. Biological success, in such a community, is achieved partly by co-operation, partly by competition. The former is promoted by friendly feeling, the latter by hostile feeling. Thus on the whole, we feel friendly towards those with whom it would be biologically advantageous to co-operate if we lived in uncivilized conditions, and hostile towards those with whom, in like conditions, it would pay us to compete. In all *genuine* friendship and hostility there is an instinctive basis connected with biological egoism (which includes the survival of descendants). Some religious teachers and moralists preach friendly feeling as a duty, but this only leads to hypocrisy. A great deal of morality is a cloak for hostility posing as "true kindness," and enabling the virtuous to think that in persecuting others out of their "vices" they are conferring a benefit. When I speak of friendly feeling I do not mean the sort that can be produced by preaching; I mean the sort which is instinctive and spontaneous. There are two methods of increasing the amount of this kind of feeling. One is physiological, by regulating the action of the glands and the liver; everyone knows that regular exercise makes one think better of other people. The other is economic and political, by producing a community in which the interests of different people harmonize as much as possible and as obviously as possible. Moral and religious teaching is supposed to be a third method, but this view seems to rest on a faulty psychology.

The stock instance of the friendly attitude is the feeling of a maternal mother for a young child. As the most obvious example of the unfriendly attitude we may take jealousy. Sex-love is, of course, a good example of instinctive co-operation, since no one can have descendants without another person's help. But in practice it is so hedged about by jealousy that, as a rule, it affords a less adequate example of friendly feeling than maternal affection. Paternal affection involves, as a rule, a mixed attitude. There is usually some genuine affection, but also much love of power, and much desire that children should reflect credit on their parents. A man will be pleased if his boy wins a prize at school, but displeased if he inherits money from his grandfather, so as to become independent of the paternal authority as soon as he is twenty-one. There is a melancholy satisfaction when one's boy dies for his country, of a sort not calculated to increase filial affection in those young men who witness it:

"Snug at the club two fathers sat,
Cross, goggle-eyed, and full of chat.
One of them said: 'My eldest lad
Writes cheery letters from Bagdad.
But Arthur's getting all the fun
At Arras with his nine-inch gun.'

'Yes,' wheezed the other, 'that's the luck!
My boy's quite broken-hearted, stuck
In England training all this year.
Still, if there's truth in what we hear,
The Huns intend to ask for more
Before they bolt across the Rhine.'
I watched them toddle through the door—
These impotent old friends of mine."

Of course war affords the supreme example of instinctive co-operation and hostility. In war, the instinctive prime mover is hostility; the friendly feeling towards our own side is derivative from hatred of the enemy. If we hear that some compatriot with whom we are unacquainted has been captured by the enemy and brutally ill-used, we shall be full of sympathy, whereas if his brother dies a lingering death from cancer we shall take it as a mere statistical

fact. If we hear that the enemy underfeed their prisoners, we shall feel genuine indignation, even if we are ourselves large employers paying wages which compel underfeeding. The formula is: sympathy with compatriots in all that they suffer through the common enemy, but indifference to all that they suffer from other causes. This shows that, as we asserted, the friendly feelings arising during war are derivative from the hostile ones, and could not exist in the same form or with the same wide-spread intensity if hatred did not exist to stimulate them. Those who see in national co-operation during war an instinctive mechanism which could be applied to international co-operation during peace have failed to understand the nature of the mechanism which war brings into play, or the fact that without enmity there is no stimulus to set it in motion.

There is, it is true, in addition to sex and parenthood, a form of instinctive co-operation which involves no enemy, and looks at first sight very hopeful as a social incentive. I mean that kind of co-operation in work which, so far as human beings are concerned, one finds most developed among uncivilized peoples, and which is carried to its highest perfection by ants and bees. Rivers, in his book on *Instinct and the Unconscious* (page 94 ff.) describes how the Melanesians carry out collective work apparently without any need of previous arrangements, by the help of the gregarious instinct. I do not believe, however, that much use can be made of this mechanism by civilized communities. The instinct involved appears to be very much weakened by civilization, and is probably incompatible with even the average degree of intellectual development that exists where school education is common. Moreover, even when it exists most strongly, it is not such as to make complicated large organizations possible. It seems also that with the progress of intelligence the individual grows more self-contained, less receptive to immediate impressions from other personalities, which survive chiefly in fragmentary and sporadic forms such as hypnotism. The primitive instinct for collective work is certainly one to be borne in mind, but I do not think it has any very important contribution to make to the solution of industrial problems.

In order to stimulate friendly feeling and diminish hostile feeling, the things that seem most important are: physical well-being, instinctive satisfaction, and absence of obvious conflict between the interests of different individuals or groups. On the first two heads, we have already said enough in considering instinctive happiness.

The last head, however, raises some interesting points. Our present society, under the influence of Liberal ideals, has become one which, while it retains immense social inequalities, leaves it open to any man to rise or sink in the social scale. This has resulted from combining capitalism with a measure of "equality of opportunity." In mediaeval society the inequalities were as great as they are now, but they were stereotyped, and accepted by almost everybody as ordained by God. They did not therefore cause much envy, or much conflict between different classes. In the society that socialists aim at, there will not be inequality in material goods, and therefore economic competition and economic envy will be non-existent. But at present we have the evils of the mediaeval system without its advantages: we have retained the injustices, while destroying the conception of life which made men tolerate them. It is evident that, if the prevalence of competition and envy is to be overcome, an economically stereotyped society is essential. It is also evident that, in the absence of the mediaeval belief that hereditary social grades are of divine ordinance, the only stereotyped society in which people can acquiesce is one which secures economic justice in an obvious form—that is to say, economic equality for all who are willing to work. Until that is secured, our economic system will continue to grind out hatred and ill-will. What is called "equality of opportunity" is of course not real equality, even of opportunity, so long as we retain inheritance of private property and better education for the children of the well-to-do. Inequality must breed strife unless it is supported by a philosophy or religion which even the unfortunate accept. At present, no such doctrine is conceivable. Therefore equality in material goods is an essential condition for the prevalence of friendly feelings between different classes, and even between the more fortunate and the less fortunate members of the same class, or between rivals who hope in time to outdistance each other. A society will not produce much in the way of mental goods unless it is materially stereotyped. This applies to all kinds of mental goods, but for the present it is only friendliness that concerns us.

In preaching the advantages of a materially stereotyped society, I am conscious of running counter to the real religion of our age—the religion of material progress. We think that it would be a great misfortune if the rate at which new mechanical inventions are made were to slacken, or if people were to grow lazy and easy-

going. For my part, since I came to know China, I have come to regard "progress" and "efficiency" as the great misfortunes of the Western world. I do not think it is worth while to preach difficult virtues or extremes of self-denial, because the response is not likely to be great. But I have hopes of laziness as a gospel. I think that if our education were strenuously directed to that end, by men with all the fierce energy produced by our present creed and way of life, it might be possible to induce people to be lazy. I do not mean that no one should work at all, but that few people should work more than is necessary for getting a living. At present, the leisure hours of a man's life are on the whole innocent, but his working hours, those for which he is paid (especially if he is highly paid) are as a rule harmful. If we were all lazy, and only worked under the spur of hunger, our whole society would be much happier. Think of a man like the late Lord Northcliffe, working like a galley-slave to produce bloodshed and misery on a scale hitherto unknown in human history. How admirable it would have been if he could have been persuaded to lie in the sun, or play bridge, or study chess-problems, or even take to drink. But, alas, such men have no vices.

ENJOYMENT OF BEAUTY. On this subject it is not necessary to say much, as the defects of industrial civilization in this respect are generally recognized. It may, I think, be taken as agreed that industrialism, as it exists now, destroys beauty, creates ugliness, and tends to destroy artistic capacity. None of these are essential characteristics of industrialism. They spring from two sources: first, that industrialism is new and revolutionary; second, that it is competitive and commercial. The result of the first is that people do not aim at permanence in industrial products, and are loath to lavish much care on something that may be superseded by tomorrow. The result of the second is that manufacturers value their wares, not for their intrinsic excellence, but for the profit to be made out of them, which is (roughly) the excess of their apparent value above what they are really worth, so that every defect not evident at first sight is advantageous to the producer. It is obvious that both these causes of ugliness might be expected to be absent from an industrialism which was stereotyped and socialistic, since it would be neither revolutionary nor worked for profit. It therefore remains only to consider the third point, namely, artistic capacity.

It would seem, from the history of art, that nine-tenths of artistic capacity, at least, depends upon tradition, and one-tenth, at most, upon individual merit. All the great flowering periods of art have come at the end of a slowly maturing tradition. There has, of course, been no time for industrialism to generate a tradition, and perhaps, if the absence of tradition were the only thing at fault, we could wait calmly for the operation of time. But I fear that the other element, individual artistic merit, without which no good tradition can be created, can hardly exist in an atmosphere of industrialized commercialism. Commerce which is not industrial is often extraordinarily favourable to art; Athens, Venice, Florence are noteworthy examples. But commerce which is industrial seems to have quite different artistic results. This comes probably from the utilitarian attitude which it generates. An artist is by temperament a person who sees things as they are in themselves, not in those rough convenient categories which serve for the business of life. To the ordinary man, grass is always green, but to the artist it is all sorts of different colours according to circumstances. This sort of thing, in anybody who is not already a famous artist, strikes the practical business man as a waste of time—it interferes with standardizing and cataloguing. The result is that, although eminent artists are fêted and paid highly, the artistic attitude of mind is not tolerated in the young. A modern industrial community, when it wants an artist, has to import him from abroad; it then pays him such vast sums that his head is turned and he begins to like money better than art. When the whole world has adopted commercial industrialism, the artistic habit of mind will everywhere be stamped out in youth, by people who cannot see any value in it unless its possessor is already labelled as a celebrity. This points to the same requirements as we found before: a society which is stable as regards the material side of life and the methods of production, where industrialism has ceased to be competitive and is used to make life more leisurely instead of more strenuous. And the first step towards this end is the general diffusion of a less energetic conception of the good life.

KNOWLEDGE. The strongest case for commercial industrialism can be made out under the head of scientific knowledge. Since the industrial revolution there has been an enormous increase both in the general level of education and in the number of men devoted

to learning and research. The importance of science for industrial progress is very evident, and all industrial States encourage scientific research. But even in this sphere the utilitarian habit of mind inseparable from our present system has deleterious effects, which are only beginning to be evident. Unless some people love knowledge for its own sake, quite independently of its possible uses, the new discoveries will only concern the working out of ideas inherited from disinterested investigators. Mendelism is now studied by hosts of agriculturists and stock-breeders, but Mendel was a monk who spent his leisure enjoying his peas-blossoms. A million years of practical agriculturists would never have discovered Mendelism. Wireless is of great practical importance: it facilitates slaughter in war, the dissemination of journalistic falsehood in time of peace, and the broadcasting of trivialities to relieve the tedium of evening hours not devoted to success. But the men who made it possible—Faraday, Maxwell, and Hertz—were none of them the least interested in furthering this remarkable enrichment of human life; they were men solely interested in trying to understand physical processes, and it can hardly be said that the existence of industrialism helped them even indirectly. The modern study of the structure of the atom may have a profound effect upon industrial processes, but those who are engaged upon it are very little interested in this possible future effect of their work. It seems likely that the utilitarianism of commercial industry must ultimately kill the pure desire for knowledge, just as it kills the very analogous artistic impulse. In America, where the more utilitarian aspects of science are keenly appreciated, no great advance in pure theory has been made. None of the fundamental discoveries upon which practical applications depend have been made in America. It seems probable that, as the point of view appropriate to commercial industry spreads, utilitarianism will make such fundamental discoveries more and more rare, until at last those who love knowledge for its own sake come to be classified in youth as "morons" and kept in institutions for harmless lunatics.

This, however, is not one of the main points I wish to make. There are, in fact, two such points: first, that pure science is infinitely more valuable than its applications; second, that its applications, so far, have been in the main harmful, and will only cease to be so when men have a less strenuous outlook on life.

To take the second point first: Science, hitherto, has been used

for three purposes: to increase the total production of commodities; to make wars more destructive; and to substitute trivial amusements for those that had some artistic or hygienic value. Increase in total production, though it had its importance a hundred years ago, has now become far less important than increase of leisure and the wise direction of production. On this point it is not necessary to enlarge further. The increasing destructiveness of wars also needs no comment. As for trivial amusements: think of the substitution of the cinema for the theatre; think of the difference between the gramophone and the really beautiful songs of Russian peasants; think of the difference between watching a great football match and playing in a small one. Owing to our belief that *work* is what matters, we have become unable to make our amusements anything but trivial. This is part of the price we had to pay for Puritanism; it is no accident that the only great industrial countries are Protestant. People whose outlook on life is more leisurely have a higher standard for their amusements: they like good plays, good music, and so on, not merely something that enables them to pass the time vacuously. So far, however, science has only intruded into the world of amusement in ways that have made it more trivial and less artistic. Nor can this be prevented so long as men think that only work is important.

As for the greater value of pure rather than applied science, that is a matter which goes deeper, but which it is difficult to argue. Applied science, while men retain their present ideals, has the sort of effects we have been considering, which I for my part find it very difficult to admire. Pure science—the understanding of natural processes, and the discovery of how the universe is constructed—seems to me the most god-like thing that men do. When I am tempted (as I often am) to wish the human race wiped out by some passing comet, I think of scientific knowledge and of art; these two things seem to make our existence not wholly futile. But the *uses* of science, even at the best, are on a lower plane. A philosophy which values them more than science itself is gross, and cannot in the long run be otherwise than destructive of science.

On all four heads, therefore, we are led to the conclusion that our social system, our prevailing habits of mind, and our so-called moral ideals, are destructive of what is excellent. If excellence is to survive, we must become more leisurely, more just, less utilitarian, and less "progressive."

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A DRAWING. BY STUART DAVIS

THE GOLD COAST

BY JOHN FREEMAN

A MORE beautiful dragon-fly had never been seen: he must follow it, catch it, release it unharmed and lovelier than before. Hovering at the edge of Crispin's Pool it seemed like a shining arrow of gold, shot from the sun and pausing before it fell. If it fell it would fall into the green water. Richard—Richard Corbet Clyne—had not been to the Pool since last winter, when it was frozen over and he tried to skate on the rimy surface, and skimmed pebbles upon it, and smiled to hear the noise. It was wonderful that he had walked and slid helplessly, where now, if this fine arrow of gold fell, it would be spoiled and drowned.

The dragon flashed suddenly past him and Richard plunged through the green bracken after it, wishing he had a cap instead of a flimsy handkerchief that would be so long in falling if he flung it. He scrambled up the sandy path, not stopping to notice how many rabbits must haunt the copses, and followed the dragon until it stayed and flashed its shaking light again. Richard, too, paused, for he was out of breath and knew he was too far off to attempt to catch the dragon-fly by tossing a handkerchief, and feared to fold a stone in it. How lucky were the boys who went out with nets. Next term he would sell all his stamps and buy a net—oh, but his mother would be sure to forbid it. His mother, he obscurely felt, was proud of him, and encouraged him in every serious pursuit—stamp collecting was one—but butterfly-hunting was merely hunting, a violent exercise and no more. If he needed play, there was chess; and he sighed to think that though he sold every stamp he possessed he would be no nearer getting a net. The Martins had nets, but he couldn't bring himself to borrow things he wanted for his own, especially since his mother disapproved. He might persuade her by showing her he really could play chess now, but he hated chess—and look, the sheeny wings were gone!

Richard sprang up and followed again, but a single glimpse of the brilliant being was all: the dragon-fly had vanished and the sky was empty. A hundred nets would make no difference now.

A man working at the hedge watched him as he turned away disappointed, and Richard tried to look as though he didn't care or was unconscious of dragon-flies burning swiftly through the air. The labourer saw the pretence and smiled, and Richard, not quite understanding the smile, was still lightly teased by it. The man was laughing at him! The man, truly, was not laughing at the boy, but at his own half-shaped thoughts on seeing the boy chasing and losing a fly; for he thought of himself as a boy and was conscious of looking a long way backwards—forty years away when lovely things tormented his eyes with their freedom and light. Had he spoken he could have said no more than "That minds me now." Richard's shadow was but a shadow falling upon a hidden nerve and waking it to brief sensitiveness.

Richard's shadow followed him through the thin wood, back towards Crispin's Pool, and before he reached it he stopped, and slid down at the foot of a beech. It was so pleasant to loll there, for in the softness of this early summer warmth he felt a kind of physical languor creeping over his frame, so that for a while it was better to be idle than active. But though he lay still, his head rubbing now and then against the stained trunk, his thoughts were busy enough; at first turning after the lost fly and then, as he looked up at the blue, following the limbs of the beech tree into the sky. How could a tree hold its arms so firm and still, when his own—stretched out level from his shoulders—became in a moment so heavy and tremulous? He dropped them and looked up again, and saw a sunbeam through the leaves gilding the pale green of a great member that sprang high into the blue—gold on the pale green. The unspoken word made him think of the Gold Coast and his father. The Gold Coast—sparkling gold on dull gold sands, gold sparkling under shallow waves, gold flowing down in almost imperceptible morsels with the river to the sea; the Gold Coast—muddy forests, and figures black as mud, shining like mud after rain, staggering down through forests under small heavy bales of gold. An alligator moving slowly made a swell in the river, and slowly heaved his bulk out of the river water—a score of tiny streams falling from his corrugated back, and gold dust sliding in them or caught between the horny channels, sparkling like golden frost in the sun. Golden frost—the gold of the tropics where the heat made everything faint, except these minute, hard particles of golden frost.

The Gold Coast! Once he had thought his father was King there—had conquered it, perhaps, and stayed to rule. But that early fancy had faded, for his father had not returned. Nor had he died, for his mother had not worn black nor talked of him as Aunt Marian had talked and wept when Uncle had died. His father couldn't be dead, yet could he still be on the Gold Coast? Surely letters at least would come, and gifts, and they would be rich. He couldn't say how long it was since his father had kissed him good-bye and promised him—"all sorts of things, Richard."

"A gun, father?"

"All sorts of things at any rate, Richard." But his mother interrupting said quietly, "Don't promise the boy."

Richard wondered why his father was not to promise, and why his father, hearing the interdict, merely looked at him with smiling eyes that still promised, and said no more, but turned towards the trunks, tied the straps, sprang into the seat, and with a splendid flourish of the whip drove off—to a ship, to the Gold Coast. How long ago was that? Three Christmases had gone—no, four, and no gun had come, no arrows, no African marvels, no letter even, no promise even. . . . Nothing! His mother had simply silenced him when he asked questions—silenced him with a look, a quiet, "I don't know, Richard," or "You must wait, Richard"—words said in that familiar way of hers which always expressed, Don't ask questions. But questions persisted though unasked, and he questioned himself; indeed of late he had questioned constantly the absence and the silence of his father. No letter had come, nor had he ever surprised his mother writing. How could she live so quietly without a word, when he himself, a child, hungered for a word? Why was his mother so quiet as to make him afraid to disturb her with his play? Why was he still a day-scholar, when he had so long been promised a boarding school? The Gold Coast—that was where his father had gone, and although he was no longer so stupid as to think of him as King of the Gold Coast, he couldn't understand why, since his father was *there*, they should be growing poorer at home. Everything had grown quieter; people no longer called at the house as they used to do when he was a small boy and his father was commonly at home; and his mother seldom met people outside now. Nobody spoke to him of his father, and although he was glad, yet he still wondered why nobody spoke. There was a

fairy story he'd been told once, of a tower of silence, with the moon rising up one side and setting on the other, and in it was a silver Prince who had everything he wished for except the sound of a voice. He forgot what had happened to the Prince, but he saw the tower, its rising and falling moon, and the unmoving hands of the clock, with the Prince looking over the tower. If only his mother would say to him, "Richard, I'll tell you about your father now," he could bear anything she might tell him; for it must be something to bear. One day he would know, of course, he would insist upon knowing; but as yet he could not face his mother's steady look. And so thinking, he caught again the glimpse of the gliding beam and, feeling miserable now, stretched himself, rose, and walked on.

—But why walk so quickly, since he had the whole day? His mother had given him leave to roam as he would, with a packet of egg sandwiches and a stick of American chocolate; soon he would find a spot from which he could see things passing, and eat his lunch. Devil's Wood, that would be the place, for at the top of the wood were cross-roads and carts went by, farm wagons, sometimes fast motors; he could time them over the exact quarter-mile from the post-office to the cross-roads, proud of his silver watch that ticked off the seconds so loudly.

Half way to the wood he heard a voice and saw a schoolfellow approaching. "Hullo, Alexander"—"Hullo, Clyne!" for a moment exhausted the intelligence of the twain; and then Richard said, "You haven't gone away yet, then?"

"No, hang it, we can't go for a day or two. They've got measles down in Cornwall and we've got to find a fresh place. When are you going?"

Richard was resentfully evasive. "I don't quite know yet . . . my mother—where are you going now?"

"Anywhere," and the two moved on together. They had never been great friends, for Richard didn't quite like young Boney, as Alexander was called. Young Boney was an awkward-looking, pallid, fat boy, suspected of Jewishness mainly on account of a nose which was thought conclusive evidence in spite of voluble denials and protests. His nose, thick lips, dark eyes, and pallid fleshiness gave the lie to his assertions; even his unvarying good nature argued against him.

"I'm going to leave after next term," said Boney; "my father

will be home then and we're going to move. When I'm older I'm to have a pony. You haven't got a pony, have you?"

Richard shook his head, and the other pursued, "Rabbits?"

Again Richard shook his head and said no and then Boney cried, "I say, come and see mine. It isn't far." At first Richard hesitated, and then allowed himself to be led across the road to a path by the river side, over the hanging bridge that swayed, stooped, and recovered as they passed it, and then up between steep hot banks of dustless herbs. Twenty minutes brought them to a white gate, a short avenue of ragged elms, a barn with a gilded vane, another gate, and a courtyard which seemed to Richard a wonderful place for roller skates—large smooth flags with smaller flags for border, and grass growing at the edges. He had never been to the house before and looked round with a little envy at the spacious yard and the stone casements deep in the thick wall.

"Look at the date," said Boney, pointing to the 1617 cut over the doorway, with a faint A. M. traced in the greening stone. "Year after Shakespeare's death—always remember that now," he added. "Nobody at home, I expect, unless it's Myra."

Boney looked round before opening a heavy door: there wasn't a maid in sight; then with a furtive "Wait!" he entered and in a moment joined Richard with a canister of grain. "They won't let me feed them before feeding time," he explained, and laughed as they went under an arch and along a tiled path, soft with tarnishing mosses, into an orchard. The sun seemed cool under the trees, and as the wind shook the small pears and apples overhead, and bent the raspberry canes, Richard shivered as though the wind touched his branches also.

In a corner of the orchard the rabbit hutches hung, just beneath the glossy ivy. Boney thrust the canister into Richard's hands, squeezed his head and shoulders into a door, and dragged out one by one the quivering white bodies. The sleek coats glistened in the sun as Boney held the quick-breathing startled creatures by the ears and felt the fatness of their bellies. "No, no one ever touches them, Clyne," said Boney, and refused to let Richard do more than stroke them and feel the silk of their ears. Suddenly a voice surprised the boys—"What on earth are you doing, Cassy?"

Richard was the first to turn and saw a girl of fifteen coming near over the grassy path, dressed in something richly red. He

stared at the bright-hued figure, full and soft under the long face, and was confused as she stared back. "It's all right, Myra, I'm only showing Clyne my rabbits."

"But you know you're not allowed to feed them, Cassy. You make them so horribly fat—it's loathsome." She took no notice of Richard save to smile at him when she ended; but as she turned her face away she added, half to Richard and half to the sky, "Cassy's such a donkey with rabbits."

Her brother smiled. "Well, you're afraid of them—you're afraid of everything, silly."

Myra moved off. "You'd get into trouble, only mother's out."

Richard looked after her diminishing figure, as it swayed under the apple boughs. The sun and dappling shadow made her dress bright as a bird's plumage—peacock-like for richness; and as she passed from sight he heard her voice ambling an air, no, he couldn't be quite sure of the air, and only felt that the voice was rich and full. Boney was still feeding and fondling his rabbits, and after a moment's silence Richard asked him, "Is that your sister—Myra?"

"Yes, of course."

"Why did she call you Cassy?" And as Boney didn't answer at once, Richard pursued teasingly, "It might be short for so many names—Cassius, the envious Casca; why it might be Casabianca."

"I say," protested the other.

"What is it short for, then?" He was seized with a desire to drag his name from Boney, not because he was interested in names, but because real names were hidden and between the boys at school there was a rigid secrecy upon this most intimate and sacred subject. He wanted Boney's name because he shared the school's attitude of slightly despising Boney, Boney being clever, of rich parents, and with showy habits, and a generally mysterious origin. "What is Cassy short for?"

Boney was afraid to tell, but since Richard knew now that he was called Cassy he was afraid the name might be used at school. After a cunning moment he looked up and said, "Well, I'll tell you, on conditions of course."

"Well—what conditions?"

"You tell me yours, and we'll both swear a solemn oath—a really dreadful solemn oath—not to tell any one else."

"All right—I'll swear."

"A solemn oath, mind?"

"Yes, yes, anything you like."

"And you will tell me yours?"

"Well—yes, if you like."

"Then say after me, "I swear by Almighty God—"

Richard repeated the words, though now he regretted the oath, but when Boney began, "And by the—" Richard stopped him. "You can't swear any more after that, you know." He felt uncomfortable.

"All right then," said Boney, a little dubiously; and stepping nearer and lowering his voice said, "Caspar David." The syllables pleased him as he uttered them and he repeated proudly, "Caspar David Alexander. But you're not to tell, and you're never to call me Cassy."

"I didn't promise that," began Richard, but seeing the alarm on Boney's face he added, "But I won't tell."

"Now tell me yours," said Boney, with a hint of contempt for anything he might hear.

Richard was suddenly dismayed. How could he do what no other boy would do—except of course Boney, who wasn't like the others? The oath seemed now a snare, but the keeping of it a crime; he *couldn't* tell. He ought not to have sworn—and who was Boney, anyhow, to make him swear and tell?

"You won't repeat it, Boney, mind," he cried warningly.

"Of course I won't."

Looking at the other's eyes Richard became utterly mistrustful. . . . It would be wrong to tell—but how to get out of telling? In a swift moment he had decided.

"John Thomas—John Thomas Clyne." He was conscious of staring firmly at the other while he spoke the virtuous lie. Why should he tell him?

"Pah!" cried Boney contemptuously. "That's not much of a name to make a fuss about."

"But you've sworn."

"Of course . . . I say, it's stupid here. Come on and I'll show you things." Standing up he yawned and led the way back to the house. As they returned by the same mossy path Richard was teased by a regret. He'd deceived Boney and didn't mind that very much; he'd deceive him again, come to that. But he wanted to

ask about Myra—what *her* name was; and he wanted to get Boney to talk about Myra and now he couldn't. His ears were stretched for the sound of her voice, as the boys went past the kitchen door and into the pantry, beyond which was a huge dark cupboard. That cupboard, Boney said, was his; and lighting a safety lantern he began to show his treasures—earlier toys, a pair of roller skates, cards with butterfly's wings carelessly fixed on and now damaged. In a corner stood some nets. "These are mine, too," said Boney, gloatingly; and conscious of his wealth he grew suddenly expansive and taking one of the nets in his hand and testing the fabric, thrust it carelessly upon Richard. "You take it, Clyne. I've got a lot."

Richard was angry . . . the very thing, and he was angry. "I don't want it. I don't care about butterfly hunting. It's a silly game—all right for kids."

Boney took it back, seeming glad to keep it. The next moment Richard said, "I'm going on now," and moved to the door.

Boney put out the light and the two stepped away. Boney opened another door and Richard caught a glimpse of a high kitchen with heavy beams and a fire blazing behind a huge cook, who at once looked aggressive. Boney promptly shut the door, muttering, "Ugly old thing!" and led Richard towards the white gate. There he swung idly, and Richard said, "Next term is your last, then?"

"Yes. And I shall be jolly glad. I don't know where I'm going; my father hasn't settled it. He is in Russia, and he's coming back before Christmas. I've asked him for a Russian wolf-hound. Perhaps he'll take me with him next time he goes—me or Myra. Myra's going to Cheltenham when we move, so most likely it will be me. Just think, Clyne! Sledges in the snow, snow everywhere, and you wear everything fur. Wolves, lots of wolves, and you can hunt them—ugh! Frozen rivers, and big prairies in the summer—must be bigger than America."

"Does Myra want to go?" Richard was conscious of sadness at the thought that she might be leaving England.

"Myra? I don't know—I don't suppose so. . . . Girls—well. But even if I don't go next time I shall go soon, if mother will let me." Boney licked his lips at the prospect of Russian snows, and then said sharply, "Don't you wish you could go?"

"Rather—or somewhere else."

Boney's curiosity was pricked again—"Where?"

"Well, Africa."

"Why—what part?"

"The Gold Coast. It must be wonderful. Why it *sounds* wonderful. . . . Dangerous, too. You get fevers there; they use poisoned arrows. And there are snakes and—" He checked himself sharply, and wished he had held his tongue when the other asked, "But what could you do there? It sounds as if it isn't a place for a boy. . . . Got any people there?"

Richard shook his head, and anxious as he felt to change the subject, could think of nothing to divert it. Boney went on promptly. "I thought you said once that your father was there—you know, when we had to write an essay about countries. I thought you said it was Africa, somewhere."

"No—South America," answered Richard steadily. He couldn't bear that Boney should be trying thus to force him into talking of his secret thoughts.

"O well! Who wants to go to South America?" And as Boney ended Richard told him quickly, "I saw such a fine dragon-fly this morning—over by Crispin's Pool. I expect there'll be a lot there. Why don't you take your net?"

"It's too far to-day. I'm not supposed to go much away from the house while mother isn't at home. I might to-morrow."

"With Myra?"

"What an ass! She won't go and I shouldn't want to take her. She'd only be a nuisance if I did."

Richard looked angrily at Boney as he spoke, but the latter said, "I can't come any further, I shall have to run to get home for lunch."

The next minute Richard was watching Boney's awkward thick figure lurching hastily off. He murmured to himself in extremest disdain and envy, "Caspar David—Caspar David Alexander"; and then, "Myra Alexander, Myra. . . ." Miserable enough, he sat down at last to eat the lunch that had oozed its greasy patch against the lining of his old coat.

A dishevelled tramp shuffled by just as Richard finished his lunch. He scarcely saw the boy, but Richard watched him closely as he shambled on. He wondered how a man could like going

about so dirty, so unwholesome, so avoided, through the fresh green country; or, perhaps, he couldn't help it, and would rather be clean and brisk if he could. But this man certainly looked as though he didn't care, and the boy dismissed him from his mind almost as soon as he passed from sight.

And so it was all the afternoon—one thing after another falling upon his mind like a cloud, and then moving off again and leaving him idle as sunny water in a shallow bed. All the time he was dissatisfied. It wasn't that he was solitary, for he liked being alone to watch things and wonder how they came; but something flawed his mind or memory, and the day became uneasy. It was nearly tea-time when he reached the village, and he quickened his steps because his home was at the other end. The village slept perfectly; everybody was asleep, or shut within the blind walls and drinking tea; it seemed the quietest place in the world—the dullest. Nothing could happen there. . . . And nothing happened when he reached home, except that his mother remarked that he was a little late, and asked how he had spent the day. She frowned, he fancied, when he spoke of Boney and Myra, but she was still sedate as ever when she asked if Mrs Alexander had been at home. After tea his mother reminded him of his promise to read French every day during the holidays, and with this and idler matters the evening began to slip softly away.

But his quiet mind was shaken by the casual sight of a book he had often meant to read—Captain Singleton, a recent gift from someone who knew nothing of it but that it was by the author of Robinson Crusoe. It was a sheer misadventure that led Richard to open it now, and read of—Africa, dark forests, cruelties done upon the black people of the mysterious land; everywhere echoes of the magical, dark, bright Gold Coast. Richard read, then dipped, his head confused by the tangle of suggestion and picture, a tangle thick and clinging as the creepers of the forests and the fever-creepers hanging there. The book dropped from his hand and he sat perfectly still, thinking not of the Captain nor of the subtle Quaker and the men, but of his father. His father was even yet, maybe, even this aching evening, lonely and unsupported on the Gold Coast. Why wouldn't his mother speak? He looked at her, as she sat upright, knitting. There was no noise in the room but that of the clicking needles, and the moth wings against the lamp-shade;

she knitted so quickly that the clicking of her needles was like the quick plucking of strings from which all sweetness had gone; but her face was impassive—still and fine and reserved like a yellowing old ivory god brought from Bengal to stare unmoved upon the fretting of the West.

Richard looked at his mother and her eyes, lifting a second as at a summons, caught his. He tried to look boldly and challenge her with a glance; but it was his eyes that fell beneath quivering lids, and his courage that died. His mother still knitted steadily on and then, as if nothing had passed between them even while this mute challenge had sprung and quailed, she said:

"It's bedtime, Richard." His heart murmured, but his will was sunken into weakness.

It took him some time to get to sleep and he was restless, it seemed, all through restless centuries. The sound of a river soothed him and then excited him, for it was a shallow rapid river, with infinitesimal reflections beneath the water—gold, gold dust, gold particles clinging to the yellow pebbles. Huge black natives came stumbling towards him, sinister presences brandishing their arms and threatening, not him, but some other. They were threatening his father, but he could nowhere see him. "Father, father!" he cried, and rose from the bed; "Father, come away, come away from the Gold Coast."

It seemed that Myra Alexander was holding his arms firmly and leading him from the huge natives. "Father—Myra!" he muttered. The shining candle woke him, and the face that was Myra's became his mother's. "I thought I heard—" and then, remembering the rebuke of his mother's presence earlier in the evening, he said no more.

TWO POEMS

BY MARGARET NAUMBURG

COUNTRY SUNDAY

Sedately muffled feet
click across village asphalt
into black mouth
of steepled church

as impious cocks
cut the clean sabbath silence.

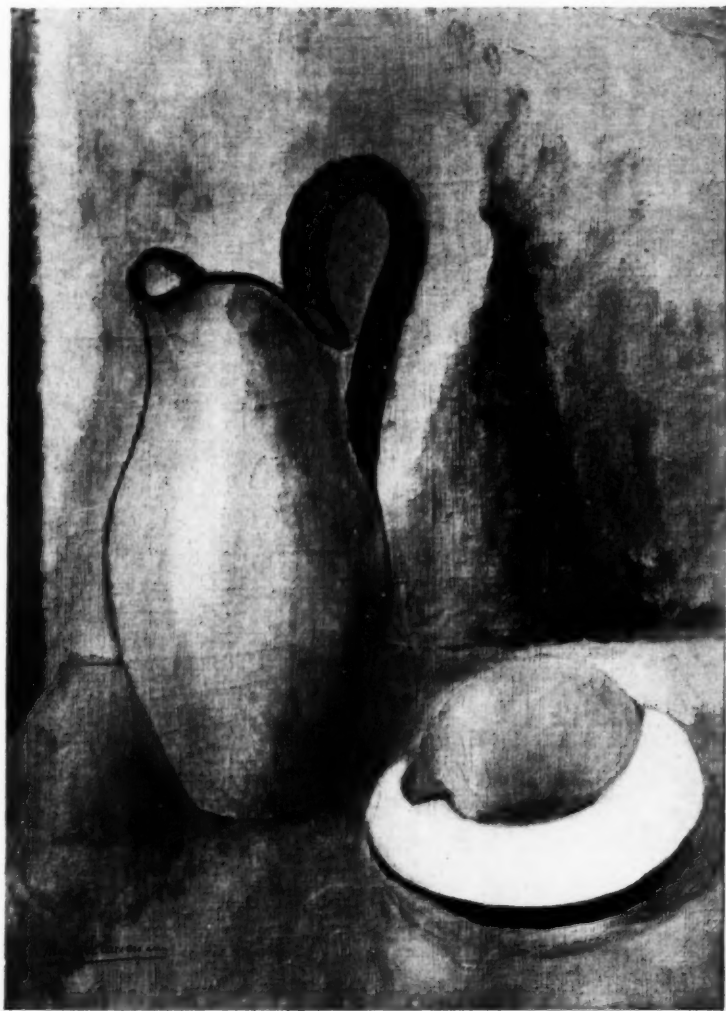
IN CENTRAL PARK

Along unkempt paths
puffy sparrows
fiddle with peanut shells.

Over endless asphalt
roller skates grind
cheerful.

On pond of puddly green
cardboard swans and quackleducks
parade,

as lozenge-like apartments
jostle flatfaced office fronts
from the rim of the sky.



Courtesy of the Galerie Alfred Flechtheim, Berlin
LE CITRON. BY MARIE LAURENCIN

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GEORGE MOORE AND GRANVILLE BARKER

BY GEORGE MOORE

MOORE (*handing Barker a cigar*): A cigar is welcome after reading; the spell of the Corona enjoins silence, but we may listen without losing any of the fragrance if the comment be favourable. Mine will provoke certainly no argument in you; you may even be glad to hear that the thought that returned to me again and again was: a dramatist's play, without trace of the novel, the poem, or the sonnet in it. Few are faithful to one literary form chosen from the beginning. Even Ibsen was a transgressor; he wrote some poems. Pater! Of course, there is Pater—like you, an exemplar of literary fidelity, his genius saving Marius again and again from drifting into the novel; and in *Imaginary Portraits* he was not less true to his genius, suave and punctilious—

BARKER: Then you like the play you have just heard better than—

MOORE: Yes, better than *The Voyage's Inheritance*, better than *The Madras House*, and better than—

BARKER: I shall not take it as a compliment if you like my new play better than *Waste*, which you did not like at all. I gave it to you to read when I was lying stricken with typhoid fever in a Dublin lodging.

MOORE: And every evening I read an act and every morning I came to tell you how much I admired the construction, the dialogue, and the characters.

BARKER: But you found faults.

MOORE: About one incident in the play my feelings cannot change.

BARKER: And the incident to which you take exception is the very one from which the action of the play springs.

MOORE: No, Barker, I do not take exception to the incident from which the action of the play springs, but to the shrubbery in which it occurs. I can understand a pursuit through a garden, a terrace, or a park, but not through laurels, a shrub so gloomy that if there had been any in the vale of Menalus, Pan's hooves would

have lagged or turned aside and the reed not been cut to which he owes his redemption from the beast. Your shrubbery, I admit, is but a trivial objection; a more serious criticism of *Waste* is your politician's lack of courtesy.

BARKER: Courtesy was not a characteristic of the politician I had in mind. But if you admit the chase—

MOORE: Admit the chase, Barker! But who could deny the right of chase?—so long as it is conducted with courtesy.

BARKER: I am afraid your meaning escapes me. I'll ask you to speak more plainly.

MOORE: In writing an elaborate work something is overlooked, and not seldom something essential. In writing *Waste* you do not seem to have remembered that to kiss a lady once is most impolite.

BARKER: My politician's transgression was barely possible, but it was possible once. A second kiss would have been a vulgarity.

MOORE: A thing so deeply implanted in human nature as a kiss, Barker, cannot, I think, be considered vulgar. And being a man of the eighteenth century (the eighteenth century continued in Ireland till 1870) I expected you to make amends for the shrubbery by introducing your characters to us in an arbour, on a terrace, or a balcony.

BARKER: William took Esther Waters on the Downs once and then abandoned her, so will you tell me how my politician differs from your footman?

MOORE: If Esther and William did not walk out again on the Downs the fault lay not with William, but with Esther. Her violent temper—

BARKER: A quick parry of yours, Moore.

MOORE: For a moment I was embarrassed, so quick was your thrust, and remembered only just in time—

BARKER: We will forget this passage of wits in which neither is worsted, and you'll tell me what you think of the new play.

MOORE: My impression is, after a first hearing, that the new play is the best you have written. The qualities of craftsmanship, of course, are the same as in your other plays—a very subtle and yet apparently easy construction, pointed dialogue, never a word wasted.

BARKER: But I thought you preferred abundance to reticence, Shakespeare's method to Ibsen's?

MOORE: I never think about methods, and when I read in the newspapers that a play is not technically a play I lay the paper aside.

BARKER: And you are right. There are plays of all kinds, and all we ask is that the writer shall produce a play good of its kind.

MOORE: You condemn monologues—

BARKER: Not always. I wrote to you that the three or four lines of monologue with which you begin *The Apostle* were unnecessary, admitting, however, that they might annoy our friend Archer.

MOORE: I have dedicated the play to you.

BARKER: I am honoured.

MOORE: And hope that one or two monologues and perhaps an aside will not blind you to other merits, should any be discoverable.

BARKER: And you are pleased with *The Apostle*, now that you have finished it to the last revision of the last comma?

MOORE: No correspondence with managers, no rehearsals, no withdrawing the play from rehearsals—an admirable play!

BARKER: But from what you told me and from what I saw in your first draft the play seemed to me designed for the stage.

MOORE: The stage was in my mind as fourteen lines are in the mind of him who sits down to write a sonnet.

BARKER: The characters of Jesus and His Apostle are treated with much reverence; the Archbishops could hardly have treated them with more, and, the Censor being no longer adamant, it might be worth while asking a management to send the play to the Censor's office.

MOORE: There is not an irreverent word in the play, but I doubt if the Censor could pass it even if he wished to do so.

BARKER: You may be right, in that a Jesus who does not die on the cross conflicts too flagrantly with current theology.

MOORE: The play may be acted in America; America is full of Unitarians. It may be acted in Germany, or in Paris, even in England privately; if I have succeeded in representing St Paul in all his instincts and attributions, he will not escape the ambition of a great actor.

BARKER: Who will know little ease till he has been seen in the part, which he will, mayhap, illuminate by his genius. You are content to wait?

MOORE: I do not attach overmuch importance to a performance.

BARKER: And you throw the book on the waters, hoping that the bait will be swallowed by some greedy fish.

MOORE: It occurred to me that it would be as well to give *The Coming of Gabrielle* to the Tauchnitz Library, and the manager of the National Theatre, Prague, picked the play up from a bookstall and decided to produce it.

BARKER: I shall print my play.

MOORE: I hope you will, for the publication will attract and prepare the public for literary drama.

BARKER: You live in London (I in Devon and Italy) and may be able to tell me if people are beginning to weary of trash.

MOORE: The public accept what the managers give them, and if an author has written books, especially well-written books, if his name, I mean, be connected with literature, the manager begins to sniff danger, for we have no record of a successful "literary" play. Of course we haven't; literature is never literary. And the manager is duped by the high-brow, and the high-brow in turn is duped by the disagreeable, else I should drop, he says, into the commonplace. The literary papers shriek "Literature at Stake!" but the public heed them not. The manager puts on *Cocoanut Ice* and gets a run of three hundred nights. The *Two-Seater* follows and gets a run of four hundred nights. And once more literature is discredited by the "literary."

BARKER: As the theatre cannot be suppressed, a Bill will be introduced into Parliament for its reformation sooner or later. There will be hitches and delays—

MOORE: There will indeed; for the roots of Puritanism are so deep in England that at the first hint of a National Theatre theology and morals will be massed against us, and the question will be asked in both Houses of Parliament if it be just that the taxpayer should put his hand into his pocket to pay for what he does not want, indeed, for what he actively dislikes.

BARKER: You talk like one who is opposed to a National Theatre.

MOORE: No, not opposed, but in doubt whether art can be beckoned. Art comes to a country and flourishes in it for a while, and then leaves it, never to return.

BARKER: It may be so; so far as you know, it is so. But to-morrow may prove your theory to be wrong. Why furnish the opposition with arguments?

MOORE: Our logic will not bring us any nearer to a National Theatre. We shall get it—if we get it—because it is desired, and I do not think the opposition will borrow my metaphysics to confute us. The argument that will be produced against us will be such as the plain man in the street can understand. He will ask, and his spokesman in Parliament, who duplicates him, will ask: For what purpose are plays written? He will answer his question himself: To please. And for whom does the playwright cater? The answer comes pat: The public. Who, therefore, are more capable of judging plays than the general public? And if the general public be admitted as competent judges, why set up another standard? The general public have always supported Shakespeare; Shakespeare is good. Answer me that if you can. And he sits down confident in the triumph of common sense over the sophistries of the crank.

BARKER: The voice of the politician whose mouthpiece you are for the moment will be heard certainly in Parliament, but I would have you remember that many voices will be heard, and that it is not to the voice of the rook or the jay the mob listen.

MOORE: The mob will listen to the nightingale, I know, because the nightingale sings for nothing.

BARKER: It surprises me to find you on the side of the mob.

MOORE: Not on the side of the mob, but their spokesman for the nonce, as you have said. I read in your book that the cost of a National Theatre would be a million. I always calculated that the sum required would be about five hundred thousand pounds.

BARKER: That was before the War. The cost would now be a million.

MOORE: Half of which, I understand, would go to the building of the theatre. And when the Bill comes before Parliament the question will be put: Why build a new theatre? Why not buy one of the theatres already in existence and save five hundred thousand pounds? I am not expressing my opinion, Barker, but anticipating an argument.

BARKER: My answer to the heckler is simple: Sir, you lack the civic sense. The business of the National Theatre is not the exclusive production of modern plays. I would not ban modern plays—who would, if we get a good play? And by a good play I do not mean a play that will run as long as a public house, but one that will encourage and enrapture those who seek pleasure in thought. In my little speech to the caviller whom you are representing at this

moment I would say that the business of a National Theatre is the glorification of London. I said just now that you lacked the civic sense, sir. Perhaps I should have worded my reproof differently, and said: You are forgetful for the moment of the civic sense, which is your possession as much as mine. And to recall the civic sense to your consciousness I would remind you that we might destroy a great deal of London without destroying London; leave us our buildings, and London would still be London. But think, sir, if you can, of London without Westminster Abbey and St Paul's. These and the many beautiful churches that throng our streets may not be as useful as garages, and for this reason there are many among us who would pull down our churches, pleading that they are without sufficient congregations, and that the thoroughfares need widening for a freer circulation of traffic and a more rapid passage of motor cars. The abolition of the National Gallery would long ago have been advocated if our utilitarians did not feel that they might find themselves in the minority—an unpardonable sin—and for the moment they prefer to justify the National Gallery as a place where young women and young men go to study the art of painting.

MOORE: As well might they study Chaucer with a view to qualifying for the post of sub-editor on one of our dailies. Only the great artist can study the past with impunity; he understands at a glance, and passes on. We must live in our own time; a modern theatre will serve us better than an archaic. Let us consider the sites that have occurred to you, Barker, as suitable for a National Theatre.

BARKER: It has often been in my mind to petition the King to concede a corner of St James' Park—

MOORE: A theatre in St James' Park! How wonderful! Go on talking, Barker. I like listening to you; go on talking.

BARKER: But for the King to concede two or three acres of St James' Park would be the thin end of the wedge. I'm sorry I can't think of a newer simile.

MOORE: Nobody has ever thought of a better one. The thin end goes on for ever, like the roseate fingers of the dawn. But you were saying?

BARKER: I was saying that if the King were to grant us a site in St James' Park for a National Theatre, other requests would come to him—for a college—

MOORE: Or for a school of art, or for a museum where stuffed birds would be shown to gaping children. You did well, Barker, to put St James' Park out of your mind as a convenient site for the National Theatre.

BARKER: Westminster has been long in my mind as the site we require. Westminster Hall was built in the reign of William Rufus. . . . You say you like listening to me, but I can see your thoughts are away.

MOORE: I admit that my thoughts strayed from you to your book, *The Exemplary Theatre*, for I suddenly remembered that in your long conversation with the Minister of Education you based your claim for a National Theatre on the educational advantages thereof.

BARKER: There was much else in my book besides the long talk with the Minister of Education, which I admit was a mistake.

MOORE: That is what is so winning in you, Barker. You are ready always to confess a mistake, and thereby you weaken your opponent's defence. The day your book arrived from the Times office I was writing an article pointing out that the twentieth century had come to believe that by the aid of a curriculum an almost perfect uniformity of intelligence can be obtained, and on opening your book the first thing that met my eye was the long conversation between you and Mr Fisher. "How can I review this book?" I asked myself. "Barker places his demand for a National Theatre on an altogether false basis."

BARKER: You would not say that listening to a play by Shakespeare, nobly interpreted, is of no avail?

MOORE: In one instance it may meet with a response. But I have little belief in the boy who reads Shakespeare; much more in the literary future of the boy who likes swinging on a gate in May-time in front of a meadow flooded with sun and shadow, his soul elated by the songs of the willow-wrens flitting in the sprouting larches.

BARKER: You have always been averse from education. I remember a phrase in a little book you wrote many years ago, *Confessions of a Young Man*: "We never learn anything that we did not know before."

MOORE: Meaning thereby that a man cannot be taught. But though he cannot be taught, he can learn, meaning thereby that he may discover a self within himself. I am thinking of the gift a man

brings into the world, for that is a man's true self, and the gift, if he be possessed of a real gift, can only be discovered by himself; it may even be argued that this gift awakes in him suddenly, and to his own great surprise.

BARKER: But how is a man to learn a trade—a carpenter, for instance? Nor is it likely that he will invent dovetailing by himself or out of his imagination. Do you know what dovetailing is?

MOORE: Indeed I do, and have practised it. It is in the workshop that a man learns a trade, not in the school. I was told this morning of a boy who had been taught metal-work and had passed all the London County Council tests, but when he made application to a silversmith for a place in his shop as an improver—a grade higher than an apprentice—the silversmith found he could do nothing with him. He tried all the boys the County Council sent him, but preferred in the end to take an ignorant boy and teach him from the beginning. And this is not the only story which I can cite in support of my belief that we never learn anything that we did not know before. I heard this morning of a boy who was crushed between a wall and a wagon when he was five, and the question was debated between parents and doctors whether the leg was to be taken off from the hip-joint. The parents decided that it would be better for the boy to die than to lose his leg, and he was allowed to crawl about the floor for five years, teaching himself a little reading and writing. At ten he began to recover the use of his limb; then the doctors took him in hand, and their treatment was so successful that at fourteen he was able to choose a trade. He said: "I'll be a blacksmith." Nobody ever could tell why he said that; he didn't know himself; probably a horseshoe nailed to the wall captured his imagination. Be that as it may, he lived to eighty-two and left a fortune of four thousand pounds to be distributed among his relatives. Martyrs are beginning to appear; not long ago a mother said she would prefer to go to prison rather than send her son to school after he was fourteen, urging on the magistrate that the time to learn a trade was between fourteen and sixteen. Whilst admitting her contention to be reasonable, the magistrate could not avoid sending her to prison, for such is the law. She accepted prison, heroic woman, and it is heroism such as hers that may in the end redeem us from a system that comes between man and his instincts. But education is being found out; the other day an architect published an admirable letter telling how time is wasted in examina-

tions, and the new demand of the teachers for higher salaries is making plain that education is of no help to anybody except teachers and that section of the Labour Party which needs wastrels. But we are wasting time, Barker.

BARKER: If preaching to the converted be wasting time, you are wasting it certainly, for I am willing, more than willing, eager to admit that my attempt to couple the National Theatre with Mr Fisher's curriculum was indeed a mistake.

MOORE: You found Mr Fisher a little obtuse?

BARKER: Absent-minded, rather—his mind bent on a new curriculum.

MOORE: We will leave him meditating it, and discuss instead the play that should open the National Theatre.

BARKER: I have nothing to say against Hamlet.

MOORE: Nor have I. Better to begin with a masterpiece than to strive to appeal to sentimentality, announcing that the National Theatre will open with the story of England as told by Shakespeare in the chronicle plays.

BARKER: You are weary of the story of England?

MOORE: I would like Shakespeare better if people would leave off writing about him. Your advertisement will be applauded until the balance sheet is published, and then your praisers will begin to talk economics. The National Theatre need not make both ends meet, but the hiatus must not run into tens of thousands. If we get a National Theatre you will need all your courage and determination. The pedagogues will ask for nothing but Shakespeare, and for the whole of Shakespeare, forgetful of the fact that the human mind cannot assimilate more than three hours of text. I once heard the whole of Hamlet—five hours and a half. The first act lasted two hours, and was very wonderful, as wonderful as *The Ring*; but when we came to the fourth and the fifth acts I found it impossible to keep my mind on the stage, and so brain-weary was I that I couldn't have told blank verse from prose, nor could I have sworn that some passages from the *Daily Mail* were not being introduced. It takes five hours and a half to play *The Meistersinger*, without cuts, and when we arrive at the glories of Nuremberg we don't know what we are listening to; our minds are away, and it is not until we of wisdom propense cut an act and a half that we can appreciate the end of Wagner's opera. Another difficulty will be to decide what is Shakespeare. You will take advantage, I suppose,

of the fact that *Titus Andronicus* is not generally believed to be written by him, and omit that play from your repertory. *Pericles*, too, is certainly not by Shakespeare, and that you will probably omit. Another thing: The National Theatre will not be confined entirely to the acting of Shakespeare. You will seek among his contemporaries, if the pedagogues will allow you to, and find a pleasant change of diet in Jonson, whose plots, unfortunately, are not always very explicit, and there's nothing more wearisome than a play one cannot follow. I doubt very much if there are many people who can follow the story of *Every Man in His Humour*, but the first three acts of *Volpone* are admirable. You'll have to decide if the last two might not be shortened. Ford's play, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, was received with enthusiasm when the Phoenix Society produced it. Your productions will be finer than anything the Phoenix, with little time and money at its disposal, can do. I am sorry that you are not to be the first to show the Elizabethans on the modern stage—Marlowe, Jonson, Fletcher—for he who has tasted of the Elizabethans eschews modern drama, and it would have been a fine sport to astonish London, weary of small adulteries, with Elizabethan stories of murder and incest, written when the language was sappy. But no man gets all that he asks for, and you would not cherish jealousy of a gallant little society whose ambition it is to serve as a stopgap till some Conservative or Liberal Government grants a site and a subvention. If you had been able to hold out any hope to us of a National Theatre, Lady Cunard would not have hesitated to propose a dissolution of the Society.

BARKER: Lady Cunard takes an important part in your deliberations.

MOORE: She is our President. The Phoenix owed three hundred pounds, but at one of the last performances the announcement was made that a benefactor or a benefactress, who did not wish his or her name to be known, had paid the debt. I hasten to say that I do not attribute the paying of the debt to Lady Cunard; I know no more than any other member of the Phoenix Society. I am not of the inner circle; only this I can say, that there are few of the Phoenix who have not heard it reported that her influence counted for much in getting the money that saved the Old Vic. Among much that is uncertain it seems certain that without Lady Cunard we should not have had a London opera season in 1921. Does our last opera season go back to 1920? I do not know. My admiration for

this warm-hearted, courageous woman compels me to praise her whenever her name is mentioned, and to recall to the remembrance of everybody that she is the one woman in London society whose thought for art extends beyond the narrow range of ordering a portrait to be painted and setting on foot an intrigue for the hanging of it in the National Gallery. I stop without having said all, Barker, for I would tell you that the performance given by the Phoenix of Love for Love revealed to a select London audience the unsuspected fact that we have once more amongst us a great comedy actress—Athene Seyler.

BARKER: A very remarkable actress—

MOORE: No more than remarkable in the trashy comedies you have seen her in, but in a masterpiece she is easily the greatest comedy actress I have ever seen, and I have seen many great comedy actresses.

BARKER: I regret that you did not write about her and Congreve.

MOORE: All, but you, who could appreciate one and the other were in the theatre.

BARKER: It is true that I have ceased to be a Londoner. All the more reason why you should write about the Phoenix.

MOORE: My article need not go to Devon for you to read it. You can hear it in this room, if you like. Your cigar is not yet finished?

BARKER: I am only half way through the excellent cigar you have given me, and have little hope that its excellence can be enhanced by silence. All the same, read. I am listening.

MOORE: I have poured my memories into the ear of an imaginary journalist.

BARKER: Read. My cigar is burning excellently well.

MOORE (reading):

MAID: A gentleman from the Observer has called, sir. Will you see him?

MOORE: Yes, I'll see him.

MAID: Mr Deacon.

MOORE: No, I'm not busy, Mr Deacon. I am never too busy to talk about art. Let me give you a chair, and when you are seated you'll put questions to me. But before you put the first will you allow me to talk to you a little while about the mysterious disappearance of the nine Muses from England; indeed, I might say from the

planet we inhabit, for search it from sea to sea and neither Calliope, Melpomene, nor Erato—

MR DEACON: It is true that we have lost many of the Muses, but Terpsichore—

MOORE: You have mentioned the Muse, Mr Deacon, in whom I am least interested. Terpsichore, I admit, is not easily avoided in London, and we cannot get the music she demands out of our ears; it leaves us little peace. But her great sisters are nowhere to be discovered, and many think they have followed the Gods, who, Heine tells us, went into exile in the third century; whilst others think that they have hidden themselves in the laboratories of scientists to whom they whisper secrets of poisonous gases, having become diabolic, like Wagner's Venus. I have borrowed the thought from Baudelaire, who suggests that the Erecine became diabolic among ages that would no longer accept her as divine, and what more natural than that the eight (Terpsichore is admittedly with us still) should conspire to destroy a world that no longer follows beauty? I hope you will take note, Mr Deacon, of the valuable hint I have just thrown out to account for the disappearance of the eight, and that your Editor will reserve some columns of his newspaper for a correspondence on the subject of the present occupation of the Muses, whether they have really left the planet, or are engaged in planning the destruction of a civilization concerned only with truth and knowledge. . . . I know what you are going to say, my dear sir: that want of space will prevent your Editor from considering in detail the very interesting question I have raised. I have had much to do with Editors, and know that their point of view is with affirmations rather than with negations. Now, if the correspondence I suggest were concerned with the return of the Muses, the matter would be different and he would be glad to publish a letter on the subject. You will tell him that although I cannot anticipate the return of the missing eight, I would like to point out in his valuable newspaper that the tenth Muse arrived some five years ago and at once devoted herself to the revival of the ancient art of music in England, and, when her project for English opera went into bankruptcy descended at once into the Phoenix Society and found her reward in an unbroken series of successes. I know what you are going to say: you are going to tell me that the Phoenix rises out of her own ashes. My remembrance is that art always rises out of its own ashes. Why, therefore, should not the revival of the Eliza-

bethans give birth to a new form of drama, unless, indeed, you cling to the belief that to have culture we must have long periods without culture, a theory which is difficult to rebut, for the fact that the world was without art from the sixth to the thirteenth century is the thought of everybody who thinks about art seriously. Your face, Mr Deacon, is very readable. I gather from it that you were about to ask me if I had attended all the performances, and to my great regret I answer that I have missed two or three; and of the performances I missed the one I regret the least is a certain play by John Dryden, though I am told that Athene Seyler's genius was even brighter in *Marriage à la Mode* than it was in *Love for Love*, an appreciation that betrays a certain insensibility of eye and ear to the shades which divide good verse from bad. For in reading the Elizabethans we are in salt water always; the verse is buoyant. Dryden's verse may be compared to a brackish lake, languid and muddy, and the rough words that rise to our lips express the change; the kick has gone out of it.

MR DEACON: Dryden, then, in your opinion, was the last of the Elizabethans?

MOORE: Rather the beginning of Grub Street, and that is why I cannot believe that Athene Seyler showed to greater advantage in Dryden than in Congreve. Whilst trying to collect my thoughts for this interview which you have been kind enough to come to report, I rose suddenly from my chair, saying: An actress' charm in a play cannot be put into words, at least not by me. And then stopping, I added: It's all clear enough till I try to write it to-morrow the commonplace awaits me; and I went up-stairs to dress myself for dinner. I was dining with Mr Arnold Bennett, and after dinner a lady played Mozart's Sonata in D-Major, and the gaiety and the instinctive elegance of the music recalling my memories of Athene in Congreve's comedy, I said to myself: She was to the play what Mozart's music is to his librettist, incessant, always at it. She alights and breaks into song abruptly, like a bird. She listens, and we sit amused, enchanted by the sallies of her witty eyes, by the beat of her feet. Her very clothes catch inspiration, and she adapts her gait to the character and every gesture, each adding an accent. Any omission would be a loss, any addition an excess.

MR DEACON: If Athene be in reality what she is in your memory, she is an actress comparable to Sarah or Aimée Desclée (I think her name was Aimée).

MOORE: I am glad to hear you speak of her as Athene. Rachel is known to us only as Rachel, and Sarah Bernhardt was Sarah for the greater part of her life. And her death having made her an actuality, I will tell you that Halévy, who saw the three French actresses, looked upon Sarah as the least, a long way behind Rachel in tragedy and as far behind Desclée in comedy.

MR DEACON: Did he give reasons for his preference?

MOORE: I did not press him to give reasons; his reasons seemed obvious to me, for I was thinking of Sarah's usual indifference to the play she was acting in, putting herself always in front of it, using it as a means for a cunning display of her tricks and mannerisms, and certain moments of it for an exhibition of theatrical passion in which the play and some handkerchiefs were torn into rags. Halévy could not approve of such an interpretation; no author could, I no more than Halévy, and I felt with Halévy and for Halévy when I saw Sarah walk through two acts of *Frou-Frou* and part of the third act, conveying no impression of the play, nor even of herself, seeming as commonplace an actress as her sister in the play; a shameful trick, ruining two acts so that in the third, when her moment came, she might bound about the stage like an enraged tigress till the house seemed about to come down. Of course, it came down in the figurative sense and everybody was delighted; but I, who had seen her at the Français in the 'seventies, found excuses for her, saying to myself as I returned through the jostling Strand: This is the fruit of her travels in countries in which the French language is unknown.

MR DEACON: If I understand you rightly, Mr Moore, your appreciations of Sarah's acting were certain magical moments for which much was sacrificed?

MOORE: Much was sacrificed, but the moments did not delight me, nor could they have delighted Halévy, who had seen the original *Frou-Frou*, Aimée Desclée. She was in London just before or during the war of 'seventy, and I saw her in one of Dumas *filis'* morality plays, *Les Idées de Madame Aubray*; but I did not know French then and was too young to appreciate shades. I am sure, however, that she acted from the beginning of the play to the end. She died during the war, and in the early 'seventies all Paris was talking about her in studio and in drawing-room. In the studio in the Passage des Panoramas Julian used to delight my young ears with a description of Desclée as Diane de Lys searching among

books in a library for a letter that some woman had written to her lover or that her lover had written to some woman; and in the drawing-rooms in which I danced there used to come a great, heavy, unwieldy man, who spoke little and was considered to be very stupid, but before whom everybody gave way; even the dancers, as he passed down the room, drew into groups to whisper to each other that the man who had just gone by was Desclée's lover. . . .

BARKER: Has the gentleman's name come down to us?

MOORE: It is well known in France, and if you like I can—

BARKER: I would not put you to the trouble. It would interest me more to hear if the help you received from a piece of music was a literary invention, or if it really fell out that after having despaired of bringing Athene Seyler before us as she appeared in Congreve's play, you did really—

MOORE: Yes, Barker, I did really hear the D-Major Sonata in Arnold Bennett's drawing-room and was reminded by it of Athene Seyler in *Love for Love*. But you haven't told me what you think of the interview I have just read to you.

BARKER: I think that if Athene is lucky and gets great parts to play, and her name is carried down to posterity, your description will help posterity to realize her charm. I don't know that we have got any adequate description of Rachel's acting, though pens have been busy with the three great actresses. Gautier was a past-master of descriptive writing, and the abundant Théo would have found no difficulty in telling the actress' dress from the neck to the hem.

MOORE: The fame of the actress is transitory.

BARKER: Not so transitory as the fame of the authors she represents; their works remain to decay them. The actress is more fortunate; she leaves only a name and a legend.

MOORE: You are right, Barker. The mummer is more fortunate than the poet, musician, painter, or sculptor, and Athene is fortunate among her sisters, for I have always refrained from seeing her in those parts in which she earns her bread.

BARKER: And you live in your memory of a unique performance, given, you tell me, by the Phoenix Society; but in what theatre?

MOORE: In the Lyric, Hammersmith.

BARKER: Now I am beginning to understand why you doubted the wisdom of spending five hundred thousand pounds in building

a National Theatre at Westminster. The exaltation with which the old masters are received in a theatre situated in a slum caused you to forget Wagner and the wooded hillside overlooking a plain.

MOORE: You are right, Barker. I have forgotten that the wooded hillside was chosen so that the ecstasy created in the theatre might be prolonged from act to act in the steep woods and afterwards till midnight and long after midnight in a restaurant. If we cannot have a wooded hillside overlooking an amphitheatrical landscape, let us have a river site where the ecstasy may be prolonged. Mean streets and a tangle of tramways from which we have to run for our lives like cats before pavement skaters, shatter our dreams. Whilst fleeing before them, many a time I regretted a restaurant, and many a time wondered how it was that groups of impassioned young men, inspired by a memory of the bust in the museum, did not gather about our President's motor, crying: *Ave Faustina plena gratia immortalis ago tibi gratias!*

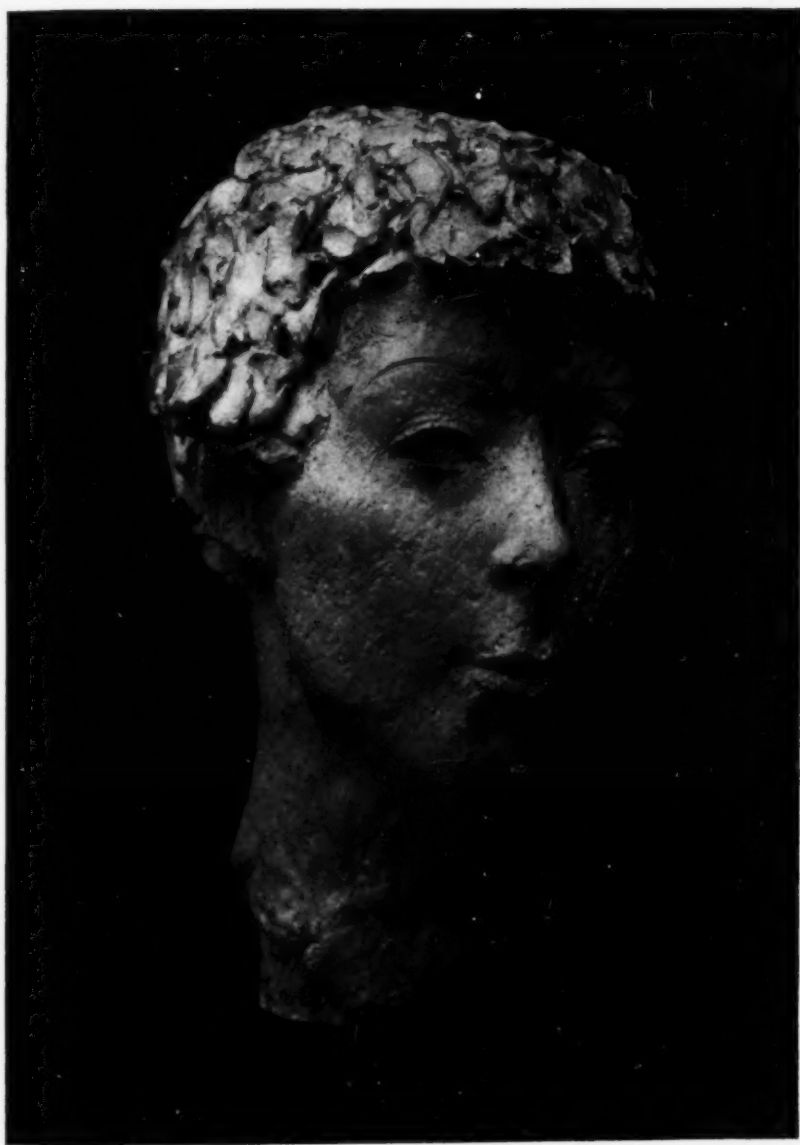
Now I know; the mean streets stayed the words on their lips. Within the theatre we were as in Wagner's theatre, but the sights and sounds without the theatre killed the ecstasy and the value of the play as "an educational influence."

DESERT MOON

BY ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH

When the desert lies
Pulsating with heat
And even the rattlesnakes
Coil among the roots of the mesquite,
And the coyotes pant by the waterholes—

Far above,
Against the sky,
Shines the summit of San Jacinto,
Blue-white and cool as a hyacinth
With snow.



MARIE LAURENCIN. BY HERMANN HALLER

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TOUJOURS JAZZ

BY GILBERT SELDES

THE word jazz is already so complicated that it ought not to be subjected to any new definitions, and the thing itself so familiar that it is useless to read new meanings into it. Jazz is a type of music grown out of ragtime and still ragtime in essence; it is also a method of production and as such an orchestral development; and finally it is the symbol, or the byword, for a great many elements in the spirit of the time—as far as America is concerned it is actually our characteristic expression. This is recognized by Europeans; with a shudder by the English and with real joy by the French, who cannot however play it.

The fact that jazz is our current mode of expression, has reference to our time and the way we think and talk, is interesting; but if jazz music weren't itself good the subject would be more suitable for a sociologist than for an admirer of the gay arts. Fortunately the music and the way it is played are both of great interest, both have qualities which cannot be despised; and the cry that jazz is the enthusiastic disorganization of music is as extravagant as the prophecy that if we do not stop "jazzing" we will go down, as a nation, into ruin. I am quite ready to uphold the contrary. If—before we have produced something better—we give up jazz we shall be sacrificing nearly all there is of gaiety and liveliness and rhythmic power in our lives. Jazz, for us, isn't a last feverish excitement, a spasm of energy before death. It is the normal development of our resources, the expected, and wonderful, arrival of America at a point of creative intensity.

Jazz is good—at least good jazz is good—and I propose to summarize some of the known reasons for holding it so. The summary will take me far from the thing one hears and dances to, from the thing itself. The analysis of jazz, musically or emotionally, is not likely to be done in the spirit of jazz itself. There isn't room on the printed page for a glissando on the trombone, for the sweet sentimental wail of the saxophone, or the sudden irruptions of the battery. Nor is there need for these—intellectually below the belt—

attacks. The reason jazz is worth writing about is that it is worth listening to. I have heard it said by those who have suffered much that it is about the only native music worth listening to in America.

I

Strictly speaking jazz music is a new development—something of the last two years, arriving long after jazz had begun to be played. I mean that ragtime is now so specifically written for the jazz band that it is acquiring new characteristics. Zez Confrey, Irving Berlin, Fred Fisher, and Walter Donaldson among others are creating their work as jazz; the accent in each bar, for example, is marked in the text—the classic idea of the slight accent on the first note of each bar went out when ragtime came in; then ragtime created its own classic notion—the propulsion of the accent from the first (strong) note to the second (weak). In jazz-ragtime the accent can occur anywhere in the bar and is attractively unpredictable. Rhythmically—essentially—jazz is ragtime since it is based on syncopation and even without jazz orchestration we should have had the full employment of precise and continuous syncopation which we find in jazz now, in *Pack Up Your Sins*, for example. It is syncopation, too, which has so liberated jazz from normal polyphony, from perfect chords, that M Darius Milhaud is led to expect from jazz a full use of polytonic and atonic harmonies; he notes that in *Kitten on the Keys* there exists already a chord of the perfect major and the perfect minor. The reason why syncopation lies behind all this is that it is fundamentally an anticipation or a suspension in one instrument (or in the bass) of what is going to happen in another (the treble); and the moment in which a note occurs prematurely or in retard is, frequently, a moment of discord on the strong beat. A dissonance sets in which may or may not be resolved later. The regular use of syncopation therefore destroyed the fallacy (as I hold it) of the perfect ear; and this is one reason why Americans are often readier to listen to modern music than peoples who haven't got used to dissonance in their folk and popular music.

It is not only syncopation that makes us indebted to negro music. Another element is the typical chord structure found there, the characteristic variations from the accustomed. Technically described one of the most familiar is the subdominant seventh chord

with the interval of a minor instead of a major seventh—a method of lowering the leading tone which affects so distant a piece as *A Stairway to Paradise* where the accented syllable of *Par'-adise* is skilfully lowered. (By extension ragtime also uses the minor third.) The succession of dominant sevenths and of ninths is another characteristic, and the intrusion of tones which lie outside of our normal piano scale is common.¹ Still another attack on the perfect chord comes from the use of the instruments of the jazz band, one for which ragtime had well prepared us. The notorious slide of the trombone, now repeated in the slide of the voice, means inevitably that in its progress to the note which will make an harmonious chord, the instrument passes through discords. "Smears," as they are refreshingly called, are the deadliest enemy of the classic tradition, for the ear becomes so accustomed to discords in transition that it ceases to mind them. (We hear them, of course; the pedants are wrong to say that we will cease to appreciate the "real value" of a discord if we aren't pained by it and don't leave the hall when one is played without resolution.) In contemporary ragtime, it should be noted, the syncopation of the tonality—playing your b-flat in the bass just before it occurs in the voice, let us say—is often purely a method of warning, an indication of the direction the melody is to take.

I put the strange harmonies of jazz first, not because they are its chief characteristic, but because of the prejudice against them. The suggestion is current that they are sounds which ought never to be uttered; and with this goes an attack on the trick instruments, the motor-horns, of the battery-man. The two things have nothing in common. The instruments of the jazz band are wholly legitimate and its characteristic instrument was invented by a German, after whom it is named, in the middle of the last century, and has been used in serious music by (and since) Meyerbeer—I refer to the saxophone. There is no more legal objection to the muted trombone than to the violin *con sordini*. And the opponents of jazz bands will do well to remember that the pure and lovely D-Minor Symphony of César Franck was thrown out as a symphony because it used the English horn. The actual sounds produced by the jazz

¹ My indebtedness, and, I suppose, the indebtedness of everyone who cares at all for negro music, is apparent—to Afro-American Folksongs, by Henry Edward Krehbiel (Schirmer).

band are entirely legitimate. We have yet to see what use they make of them.

In Krehbiel's book the whole question of rhythm is comparatively taken for granted, as it should be. Syncopation discovered in classic music, in the Scot's snap of the Strathspey reel, in Hungarian folk music, is characteristic of three-fifths of the negro songs which Krehbiel analysed (exactly the same proportion, by the way, as are in the interval of the ordinary *major*). But it is such a normal phenomenon that I have never found a composer to be interested in it. Krehbiel, to be sure, does refer to the "degenerate form" of syncopation which is the basis of our ragtime, and that is hopeful because it indicates that ragtime is a development—intensification, sophistication—of something normal in musical expression. The free use of syncopation has led our good composers of ragtime and jazz to discoveries in rhythm and to a mastery of complications which one finds only in the great masters of serious music. In describing the Dahoman war dances at the Chicago World's Fair, Krehbiel says:

"Berlioz in his supremest effort with his army of drummers produced nothing to compare *in artistic interest* with the harmonious drumming of these savages. The fundamental effect was a combination of double and triple time, the former kept by the singers, the latter by the drummers, but it is impossible to convey the idea of the wealth of detail achieved by the drummers by means of exchange of the rhythms, syncopation of both simultaneously, and dynamic devices."

The italics are mine. I am fully aware of the difference between savage and sophisticated, between folk music and popular music; yet I cannot help believing that this entire statement, including Berlioz whom I greatly admire, could be applied to Paul Whiteman playing Pack Up Your Sins or his incredible mingling of A Stairway to Paradise with the Beale Street Blues.

Freedom with rhythm is audible—should I say palpable?—everywhere. Stumbling (Zez Confrey) is in effect a waltz played against a more rapid counter-rhythm, and is interesting also for its fixed groups of uneven notes—they are really triplets with the first note held or omitted for a time, then with the third note omitted

and so on. A similar effect with other means occurs in the treatment of three notes in *Ingenue Baby*, by George Gershwin, where the same note falls under a different beat with a delightful sense of surprise and uncertainty. Mr Hooker's words are equally tricky for it isn't "*Beautiful-Ingenue-Baby*" at all; it is *Beautiful Ingenue (baby)*. In *By and By*, Gershwin has shifted an accent from the first to the second simply by giving the second the time-value usually given to the first, producing a fresh and delightful treatment of a sentimental expression. The variety of method is vastly interesting. Louis Hirsch, whom I rank fairly low as a composer for jazz, has done perfectly one obvious, necessary thing: stopped syncopating in the middle of a piece of ragtime. In the phrase "shake and shimmy everywhere" in *It's Getting Very Dark on Old Broadway*, he presents the whole-tone scale descending in two bars of full unsyncopated quarter-notes. In the works of Zez Confrey (they are issued with a snobbish tasty cover, rather like the works of Claude Debussy) the syncopation and the exploitation of concurrent, apparently irreconcilable rhythms is first exasperating and eventually exciting. They are specifically piano pieces and require a brilliant proficiency to render them.

It is a little difficult, unless one has the piano score, to determine what part is the work of the composer, what of the jazz orchestra. You can only be fairly certain that whatever melody occurs is the composer's and that rhythmically he is followed with some fidelity. All you need to do is to listen to the violin, piano, or whatever instrument it is which holds the beat, to realize what the composer has given. Harmonization is often and orchestration nearly always left to other hands. Mr Berlin makes a habit now of giving credit to his chief collaborator; and he deserves it.¹

II

Mr Berlin's masterpieces (June, 1923, but who shall say?) in jazz are *Everybody Step* and *Pack Up Your Sins*. I see no letting down of his energy, none in his inventiveness. He is, oddly, one of

¹ It has been clairvoyantly pointed out to me by another composer that Berlin's pre-eminence in ragtime and jazz may be traced to his solitary devotion to melody and rhythm; in the jazz sense there remains something always pure in his work. This supports the suggestion made in the next paragraph.

the simplest of our composers. A good way to estimate his capacity is to play the more sentimental songs (*I'm Gonna Pin My Medal on the Girl I Left Behind; Someone Else May Be There While I'm Gone; All by Myself*) in slow time and then in fast. The amazing way they hold together in each tempo, the way in which the sentiment, the flow of the melody, disengages itself in the slow, and then the rhythm, the beat, takes first place in the fast time, is exceptional. You cannot do the same with his own *Some Sunny Day*, nor with *Chicago*, or *Carolina in the Morning*. Berlin's work is musically interesting, and that means it has a chance to survive. I have no such confidence in *Dardanella* or *Chicago*. The famous unmelodic four notes occur in the latter as in *Pack Up Your Sins* (the source is the same, but we need not go into that); the working out is vastly inferior. Fred Fisher's work is sledge-hammer in comparison with Berlin's, and lacks Berlin's humour. Of that quality Walter Donaldson has some, and Gershwin much. Donaldson wrote Al Jolson's *Mammy* (I can't remember it, but I'm afraid I didn't like it) and a song I count heavily on: *Carolina in the Morning*. This song is, incidentally, a startling example of how jazz is improving the lyrics, for the majority of jazz songs are not meant primarily for singing, so the balladists take liberties, and not being held to definite end-rhyme give us "strolling with your girlie when the dew is pearly early in the morning."¹ The music is clean, rapid, and audacious. It carries the introduction (of the chorus) almost to the point of exhaustion, suspending the resolution of its phrases until the last possible moment, and then lets go, with a vast relief on the long, somewhat yodelly note. Confrey has done the same thing in *Kitten on the Keys* where one bar is repeated five times with successive tightening of interest.

Two composers are possible as successors to Berlin if he ever chooses to stop. I am sure of Gershwin and would be more sure of Cole Porter if his astonishing lyrics did not so dazzle me as to make me distrust my estimate of his music. Gershwin is in Berlin's tradition, he has almost all the older man's qualities as a composer (not as a lyric writer; nor has he Berlin's sense of a song on the stage).

¹ Internal, off-beat rhyme occurred as long ago as *Waiting for the Robert E. Lee*. Bud de Sylva has used it intelligently, but not expertly enough in *Where is the Man of My Dreams?* and Brian Hooker and William Le Baron make it a great factor in their highly sophisticated lyrics. So also Cole Porter and Anne Caldwell.

That is to say, Gershwin is capable of everything, from *Swanee* to *A Stairway to Paradise*. His sentiment is gentler than Berlin's, his "attack" more delicate. Delicacy, even dreaminess, is a quality he alone brings into jazz music. And his sense of variation in rhythm, of an oddly placed accent, of emphasis and colour, is impeccable. He isn't of the stage, yet, so he lacks Berlin's occasional bright hardness; he never has Berlin's smartness; and he seems possessed of an insatiable interest and curiosity. I feel I can bank on him. Banking on Porter is dangerous because essentially he is much more sophisticated in general attitude of mind than any of the others, and although he has written ragtime and patter-songs and jazz of exceptional goodness, he has one quality which may bar him for ever from the highest place—I mean that he is essentially a parodist. I know of no one else with such a sense of musical styles. A blues, a 1910 rag, a Savoy operetta serio-comic love song, a Mother song—he writes them all with a perfect feeling for their musical nature, and almost always with satiric intention, with a touch of parody. It is only the most sophisticated form which is germane to him; in highly complex jazzing he is so much at home, his curiosity is so engaged, he feels the problem so much, that the element of parody diminishes. Yet *The Blue Boy Blues*, almost as intricate a thing as Berlin ever wrote, with a melody overlaid on a running syncopated comment, has a slight touch of parody in the very excess of its skill. Jazz has always mocked itself a little; it is possible that it will divide and follow two strains—the negro and the intellectual. In the second case Porter will be one of its leaders and Whiteman will be his orchestra. The song *Soon*, for example, is a deliberate annihilation of the southern negro sentiment carefully done by playing Harlem jazz, with a Harlem theme, mercilessly burlesquing the *clichés* of the Southern song—the *Swanee-Mammy* element—in favour of a Harlem alley. Porter's parody is almost too facile; *Soon* is an exasperatingly good piece of jazz in itself. He is a tireless experimenter, and the fact that in 1923 others are doing things he tried in 1919, makes me wonder whether his excessive intelligence and sophistication may not be pointing a way which steadier and essentially more *native* jazz writers will presently follow. Native, I mean, to jazz; taking it more seriously.

The other way is still open—the way of Sissle and Blake, of Creamer and Layton, of A. Harrington Gibbs. The last is a name

unknown to me ten days before the moment of writing; I do not know if it represents a Southern negro or a Welshman. But—if he has composed anything, if *Runnin' Wild* isn't a direct transcript of a negro devil-tune—he is in the school of the negro composers and he has accomplished wonders already. For *Runnin' Wild* is a masterpiece in its *genre*. Note the cleverness of the execution: the melody is virtually without accompaniment; it consists of groups of three notes, the interval of time being simple and the interval of pitch in the group or between two successive groups, is quite conventional. Once three groups of three notes are played in succession; toward the end the group is twice lengthened to four notes; the orchestra is heard after each group has been sung, giving an unnerving effect of alternating sound and silence. But there is something more! There is the complete evocation of the two negro spirits—the darky (South, slave) and the buck (Harlem); the negro and the nigger. It ends with a shout which is lyrical and ecstatic at once, wild and free. It is an enchantingly gay piece, it expresses its title—one sees our own Gilda Grey stepping out in it bravely; it is, in a way, a summary of the feeling of negro music which *Shuffle Along* and its followers restored to prominence.

More must be said of the negro side of jazz than I can say here. Its technical interest hasn't yet been discussed by any one sufficiently expert and sufficiently enthusiastic at the same time. In words and music the negro side expresses something which underlies a great deal of America—our independence, our carelessness, our frankness, and gaiety. In each of these the negro is more intense than we are, and we surpass him when we combine a more varied and more intelligent life with his instinctive qualities. *Aggravatin' Papa* (don't you try to two-time me) isn't exactly the American response to a suspected infidelity, yet it is humanly sound, and is only a little more simple and savage than we are. The superb *I'm Just Wild About Harry* is, actually, closer to the American feeling of 1922 than *I Always Dream of Bill*, as expression it is more honest than, say, *Beautiful Garden of Roses*; and *He May Be Your Man* is simply a letting down of our reticences, a frankness beyond us.

I shift between the two teams, Sissle and Blake, Creamer and Layton, uncertain which has most to give. Sissle and Blake wrote *Shuffle Along*; the others accomplished the intricate, puzzling rhythm of *Sweet Angelina*, one or two other songs in *Strut Miss*

Lizzie, and Come Along, I'm Through With Worrying. Of this song a special word can be said. It is based on *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* and imposes on that melody a negro theme (the shiftlessness and assurance of "gonna live until I die") and a musical structure similar to that applied to the same original by Anton Dvorak in the *New World Symphony*. I am only a moderate admirer of this work; I am not trying to put *Come Along* into the same category, for its value is wholly independent of its comparative merits; nor am I claiming that jazz is equal to or greater or less than symphonic music. But I do feel that the treatment of a negro melody, by negroes, to make a popular and beautiful song for Americans ought not to be always neglected, always despised. I say also that our serious composers have missed so much in not seeing what the ragtime composers have done, that (like *Lady Bracknell*) they ought to be exposed to comment on the platform.

If they cannot hear the almost unearthly cry of the *Beale Street Blues* I can only be sorry for them; the whole of *Handy's* work is melodically of the greatest interest and is to me so versatile, so changing in quality, that I am incapable of suggesting its elements. Observed in the works of others the blues retain some of this elusive nature—they are equivocal between simplicity, sadness, irony, and something approaching frenzy. The original negro spiritual has had more respect, but the elements have been sparsely used, and one fancies that even in looking at these our serious composers have felt the presence of a regrettable vulgarity in syncopation and in melodic line. *Jesus Heal' de Sick* is negro from the Bahamas; its syncopation, its cry, *Bow low!* are repeated in any number of others; the spirituals themselves were often made out of the common songs in which common feeling rose to intense and poetic expression—as in *Round About de Mountain*, a funeral song with the Resurrection in a magnificent phrase: "an' she'll rise in His arms." The only place we have these things left, whether you call the present version debased or sophisticated, gain or loss, is in ragtime, in jazz. I do *not* think that the negro (in African plastic or in American rag) is our salvation. But he has kept alive things without which our lives would be perceptibly meaner, paler, and nearer to atrophy and decay.

I say the negro is not our salvation because with all my feeling for what he instinctively offers, for his desirable indifference to our

set of conventions about emotional decency, I am on the side of civilization. To any one who inherits several thousand centuries of civilization, none of the things the negro offers can matter unless they are apprehended by the mind as well as by the body and the spirit. The beat of the tom-tom affects the feet and the pulse, I am sure; in Emperor Jones the throbbing of the drum affected our minds and our sensibilities at once. There will always be wayward, instinctive, and primitive geniuses who will affect us directly, without the interposition of the intellect; but if the process of civilization continues (will it? I am not so sure, nor entirely convinced that it should) the greatest art is likely to be that in which an uncorrupted sensibility is *worked* by a creative intelligence. So far in their music the negroes have given their response to the world with an exceptional naïveté, a directness of expression which has interested *our* minds as well as touched our emotions; they have shown comparatively little evidence of the functioning of *their* intelligence. Runnin' Wild, whether it be transposed or transcribed is singularly instinctive, and instinctively one recognizes it and makes it the musical motif of a gay night. But one falls back on Pack Up Your Sins and Soon as more interesting pieces of music even if one can whistle only the first two bars. (I pass the question of falling farther back, to the music of high seriousness, which is another matter; it is quite possible, however, that the *Sacre du Printemps* of Strawinsky, to choose an example not unaffected by the jazz age, will outlive the marble monument of the Music Box.

III

Nowhere is the failure of the negro to exploit his gifts more obvious than in the use he has made of the jazz orchestra; for although nearly every negro jazz band is better than nearly every white band, no negro band has yet come up to the level of the best white ones, and the leader of the best of all, by a little joke, is called Whiteman. The negro's instinctive feeling for colourful instruments in the band, is marked; he was probably the one to see what could be done with the equivocal voice of the saxophone—a reed in brass, partaking of the qualities of two choirs in the orchestra at once. He saw that it could imitate the voice, and in the person of Miss Florence Mills saw that the voice could equally imitate

the saxophone. The shakes, trills, vibratos, smears, and slides come natural to him, although they produce tones outside the scale, because he has never been tutored into a feeling for perfect tones, as white men have; and he uses these with a great joy in the surprise they give, in the way they adorn or destroy a melody; he is given also to letting instruments follow their own bent, because he has a faultless sense of rhythm and he always comes out right in the end. But this is only the beginning of the jazz band—for its perfection we go afield.

We go farther than Ted Lewis. M Darius Milhaud has told me that the jazz band at the Hotel Brunswick in Boston is one of the best he heard in America, and stranger things have happened. The best of the negro bands (although he is dead I make exception for that superb 369th Hell-fighters U. S. Infantry Band as it was conducted by the lamented Jim Europe) are probably in the neighbourhood of 140th Street and Lenox Avenue in New York and in the negro district of Chicago. Many hotels and night clubs in New York have good jazz bands; I limit myself to three which are representative, and, by their frequent appearances in vaudeville, are familiar. Ted Lewis is one of the three; Vincent Lopez and Paul Whiteman are the others. Lewis does with notorious success something that had as well not be done at all. He is totally, but brilliantly, wrong in the use of his materials, for he is trying to do what he cannot do, i. e., make a negro jazz orchestra. It is a good band; like Europe's it omits strings; it is quite the noisiest of the orchestras, as that of Lopez is the quietest, and Lewis uses its (and his) talents for the perpetration of a series of musical travesties, jokes, puns, and games which are extraordinarily tedious and would be hissed off the stage if it were not for the actual skill Lewis has in effecting amusing orchestral combinations. His own violence, his exaggeration of the temperamental conductor, his nasal voice and lean figure in excessively odd black clothes, his pontificating over the orchestra, his announcement that he is going to murder music—all indicate a lack of appreciation of the medium. He may be a good vaudeville stunt, but he is not a great jazz leader.

Lewis may have a perfectly trained orchestra, but the *sense* of control which one absolutely requires, he does not give. He has violence, not energy, and he cannot interpret those qualities which Mr Haviland so justly discovers as being of our contemporary life

because he isn't hard and scornful and sophisticated himself—he is merely callous to some beauties and afraid of others and by dint of being in revolt against a serene and classic beauty pays it unconscious tribute.

The orchestra of Vincent Lopez I take as an example of the good, workmanlike, competent, inventive, adequate band. It plays at the Hotel Pennsylvania and in vaudeville and although Lopez lacks the ingenuity of Lewis in sound, he has a greater sense of the capacities of jazz and instead of doing a jazz wedding he takes the entire score of "that infernal nonsense Pinafore," cuts it to five characteristic fragments, and jazzes it—shall I say mercilessly or reverently? Because he likes Sullivan and he likes jazz. And the inevitable occurs; Pinafore is good and stands the treatment; jazz is good and loses nothing by this odd application. The orchestra has verve and, not being dominated by an excessive personality, has humour and character of its own.

Jim Europe seemed to have a constructive intelligence and had he lived I am sure he would have been an even greater conductor than Whiteman. To-day I know of no second to Whiteman in the complete exploitation of jazz. It is a real perfection of the instrument, a mechanically perfect organization which pays for its perfection by losing much of the element of surprise; little is left to hazard and there are no accidents. Whiteman has been clever enough to preserve the sense of impromptu and his principal band—that of the Palais Royal in New York—is so much under control (his and its own) that it can make the slightest variation count for more than all the running away from the beat which is common *chez* Lewis. Like Karl Muck and Jim Europe, Whiteman is a bit of a *Kapellmeister*; his beat is regular or entirely absent; he never plays the music with his hand, or designs the contours of a melody, or otherwise *acts*. I know that people miss these things; I would miss them gladly a thousand times for what Whiteman gives in return. I mean that a sudden bellow or a groan or an improvised cluck is all very well; but the real surprise is constructive, the real thrill is in such a moment as the middle of Whiteman's performance of *A Stairway to Paradise* when the *Beale Street Blues* occur. That is real intelligence—and the rest—is nowhere. The sleek, dull, rather portly figure stands before his orchestra, sidewise, al-

most somnolent, and listens. A look of the eye, a twitch of the knee, are his semaphoric signals. Occasionally he picks up a violin and plays a few bars; but the work has been done before and he is there only to know that the results are perfect. And all the time the band is producing music with fervour and accuracy, hard and sensitive at once. All the free, the instinctive, the wild in negro jazz which could be integrated into his music, he has kept; he has added to it, has worked his material, until it runs sweetly in his dynamo, without grinding or scraping. It becomes the machine which conceals machinery. He has arrived at one high point of jazz—the highest until new material in the music is provided for him.

IV

The title of this essay is provoked by that of the best and bitterest attack launched against the ragtime age—Clive Bell's *Plus de Jazz* (in *Since Cézanne*). "No more jazz," said Mr Bell in 1921, and, "Jazz is dying." Recalling that Mr Bell is at some pains to dissociate from the movement the greatest of living painters, Picasso; that he concedes to it a great composer, Stravinsky, T. S. Eliot whom he calls "about the best of our living poets," James Joyce whom he woefully underestimates, Virginia Woolf, Cendrars, Picabia, Cocteau, and the musicians of *Les Six*—remembering the degree of discrimination and justice which these concessions require, I quote some of the more bitter things about jazz because it would be shirking not to indicate where the answer may lie:

"Appropriately it [the jazz movement] took its name from music—the art that is always behind the times. . . . Impudence is its essence—impudence in quite natural and legitimate revolt against nobility and beauty: impudence which finds its technical equivalent in syncopation: impudence which rags. . . . After impudence comes the determination to surprise: you shall not be gradually moved to the depths, you shall be given such a start as makes you jigger all over. . . .

" . . . Its fears and dislikes—for instance, its horror of the noble and the beautiful—are childish; and so is its way of expressing

them. Not by irony and sarcasm, but by jeers and grimaces does Jazz mark its antipathies. Irony and wit are for the grown-ups. Jazz dislikes them as much as it dislikes nobility and beauty. They are the products of the cultivated intellect and Jazz cannot away with intellect or culture. . . . Nobility, beauty, and intellectual subtlety are alike ruled out. . . .

" . . . And, of course, it was delightful for those who sat drinking their cocktails and listening to nigger-bands, to be told that, besides being the jolliest people on earth, they were the most sensitive and critically gifted. . . . They . . . were the possessors of natural, uncorrupted taste. . . . Their instinct might be trusted: so, no more classical concerts and music lessons. . . .

"The encouragement given to fatuous ignorance to swell with admiration of its own incompetence is perhaps what has turned most violently so many intelligent and sensitive people against Jazz. They see that it encourages thousands of the stupid and vulgar to fancy that they can understand art, and hundreds of the conceited to imagine that they can create it. . . ."

It is understood that Mr Bell is discussing the whole of the jazz movement, not ragtime music alone. I do not wish to go into the other arts, except to say that if he is jazz, then Mr Joyce's sense of form, his tremendous intellectual grasp of his aesthetic problem, and his solution of that problem, are far more proof than is required of the case for jazz. Similarly for Mr Eliot. It is not exactly horror of the noble that underlies Mr Joyce's travesty of English prose style, nor is it to Mr Eliot that the reproach about irony and wit is to be made. In music it is of course not impudence, but emphasis (distortion or transposition of emphasis) which finds its technical equivalent in syncopation, for syncopation is a method of rendering an emotion, not an emotion in itself. (Listen to Stravinsky.) Surprise, yes; but in the jazz of Lewis and not in that of Whiteman which does not jeer or grimace, which has wit, and structure, i. e., employs the intellect. Nobility—no. But under what compulsion are we always to be noble? The cocktail drinkers may have been told a lot of nonsense about their position as arbiters of the arts; precisely the same nonsense is taught in our schools and preached by belated aesthetes to people whose claims are not a whit better—

since it doesn't matter what their admirers think of themselves—it is what jazz and Rostand and Michael Angelo are in themselves that matters. I have always used the word art in connexion with jazz and jazzy things; if any one imagines that the word is belittled thereby and can no longer be adequate to the dignity of Leonardo or Shakespeare, I am sorry. I do not think one has given encouragement to “fatuous ignorance” by praising simple and unpretentious things at the expense of the fake and the *faux bon*. I suggest that people do what they please about the gay arts, about jazz; that they do it with discrimination and without worrying whether it is noble or not, or good form, or intellectually right. I am fairly certain that if they are ever actually to see Picasso it will be because they have acquired the habit of seeing without *arrière-pensée*, because they will know what the pleasure is that a work of art can give, even if it be jazz art. Here is Mr Bell's conclusion, with most of which I agree:

“Even to understand art a man must make a great intellectual effort. One thing is not as good as another; so artists and amateurs must learn to choose. No easy matter, that: discrimination of this sort being something altogether different from telling a Manhattan from a Martini. To select as an artist or discriminate as a critic are needed feeling and intellect and—most distressing of all—study. However, unless I mistake, the effort will be made. The age of easy acceptance of the first thing that comes is closing. Thought rather than spirits is required, quality rather than colour, knowledge rather than irreticence, intellect rather than singularity, wit rather than romps, precision rather than surprise, dignity rather than impudence, and lucidity above all thing: *plus de Jazz*.”

It is not so written, but it sounds like “Above all things, no more jazz!” A critic who would have hated jazz as bitterly as Mr Bell does, wrote once, alluding to a painter of the second rank:

“But, beside those great men, there is a certain number of artists who have a distinct faculty of their own by which they convey to us a peculiar quality of pleasure which we cannot get elsewhere; and these, too, have their place in general culture, and must be in-

terpreted to it by those who have felt their charm strongly, and are often the objects of a special diligence and a consideration wholly affectionate, just because there is not about them the stress of a great name and authority."

—and beside the great arts there is a certain number of lesser arts which have also a pleasure to give; and if we savour it strongly and honestly we shall lose none of our delight in the others. But if we fear and hate *them*, how shall we go into the Presence?

FIRST COMMUNION

BY DJUNA BARNES

The mortal fruit upon the bough
Hangs above the nuptial bed.
The cat-bird in the tree returns
The forfeit of his mutual vow.

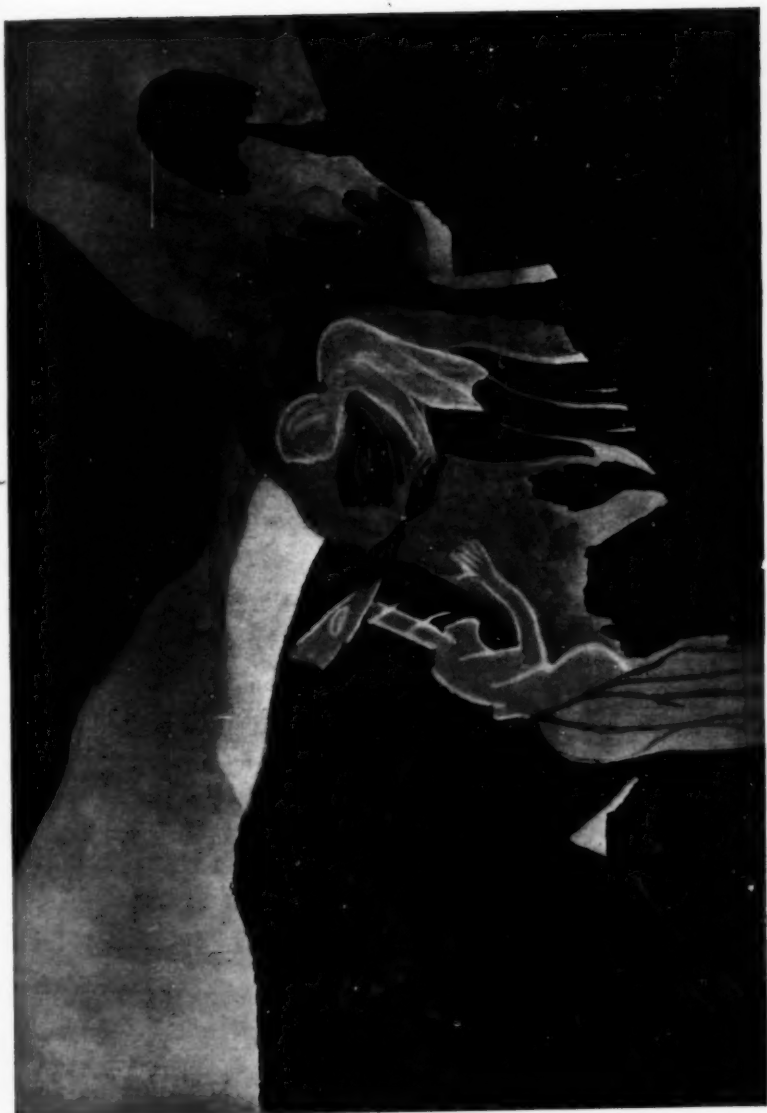
The hard, untimely apple of
The branch that feeds on watered rain,
Takes the place upon her lips
Of her late lamented love.

Many hands together press,
Shaped within a static prayer
Recall to one the chorister
Docile in his sexless dress.

The temperate winds reclaim the iced
Remorseless vapours of the snow.
The only pattern in the mind
Is the cross behind the Christ.

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PAYSAGE. BY CLÉMENT PANSAERS

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SIR JAMES BARRIE: CONFECTIONER AND PARLOUR-MAGICIAN

BY LOUIS WILKINSON

SIR JAMES BARRIE is related, with peculiar intimacy, to the mind and the emotions, to the naïveties and idealisms of the American and British public. He loves easy pretty illusions, and so does the average Anglo-Saxon. As an anodyne for those modern discontents that are the besetting virtues of our introspective serious writers and readers he has been found invaluable. From the "unpleasant truths" of Shaw and Galsworthy and Wells the patron of the circulating library turns in relief to warm and cheer his heart with the agreeable fantasies, the dainty make-believes, the harmless friendly humour of this Scotch sentimentalist.

Barrie is never disquieting, he is never bitter. Though he may indulge us and himself in sarcasm, the sarcasm is always genial. To most readers he is seldom anything but charming and companionable. He is the most "taking" of playwrights or novelists, and he never offends the normal proprieties. Like Mr A. S. M. Hutchinson, whom he praises so highly and so significantly, Barrie can be read aloud in any drawing-room to any lady. His humour is very like the humour of Punch; middle-class drawing-room humour, reassuringly undistinguished, always wholesome, always safe. When we think of the husband who declared that "his first two wives were angels; and so is the third, in many respects"—of the other husband who "clapped his hands when his wife died, and exclaimed: 'Hip, hip, hurrah!' adding only as an afterthought: 'The Lord's will be done!'"—of the dour Auld Lights who "always looked as though they were returning from burying a near relative"—of the minister who believed that "no other denomination could be saved, and not so many of his own"—we realize at once how well and how shrewdly such jests avoid the danger of giving any real offence. They are just daring enough; they are on the right side of the line: there is not implicit in them, as there is in the jests of Hardy or Shaw, any vital discontent with or any serious attack upon either orthodoxy or marriage. You may laugh and yet

moult no feather of your respectability. But when we remember, in contrast, the individual and revealing, the philosophic humour of writers of genius—such as Sterne or Ben Jonson—we may react somewhat from our enjoyment of Barrie's little jokes.

A writer may be judged by his humour: he may also be judged by his view of women and by his feeling for romance. Now to many there is no doubt something very attractive in Barrie's chivalry; something very charming in his tender self-deceptions about maids and wives and mothers and domestic felicities. He appears, in this regard, as a susceptible and high-minded adolescent to whom the more advanced volumes of feminine psychology are fast sealed. But many women enjoy adolescent devotion, many women like being idealized. They accept with ironical enjoyment—most profoundly concealed!—the tributes of the sentimental male; and they read Barrie novels or witness Barrie plays with an enjoyment of precisely the same kind. None the less most of them know well enough in their hearts that Barrie and his kin are not really their best friends. "How like you in the plan is woman, Knew you her as we!" wrote that true feminist, George Meredith. Barrie does not agree. "Oh, man!" he cries, in an orgy of abasement before the glimpses of those vistas of spiritual beauty which the name Woman discloses to him: "Oh, man! selfish, indelicate, coarse-grained at the best!" He would cherish, at all costs, in women, that "purity infinite, spotless bloom," in the male demand for which Meredith detected an "infinite grossness."

Is there, perhaps—the disconcerting reflection must sometimes have occurred to some of his admirers—is there not perhaps, after all, a certain element of grossness, of vulgarity, even, in Barrie's treatment of sex—a sort of obscene decency, one might call it? Though he never offends "nice" susceptibilities, does he not offend other susceptibilities which are characterized by a delicacy of a different kind? Witness the emphasis—the particular sort of emphasis—that he gives to certain passages in the conversation of the children in *Peter Pan*; witness the particular quality of his comments on certain innocent observations that occur in *The Young Visitors*.

There is, in relation to sex, a special sort of respectable and discreet facetiousness that is altogether alien to great writers. It is, to finer taste, infinitely more offensive than sheer ribaldry, of which, indeed, numerous men of the highest literary genius, including

notably Shakespeare himself, are abundantly capable. When Barrie refers to the beating of a lover's heart as a "palp," or when he talks with a smirk of "Little Mary," he is perhaps not more coarse in the usual sense than is Mercutio when telling Juliet's nurse the time of day, but he is certainly more coarse-grained. It is this same coarseness of grain that makes Barrie incapable of depicting true passion. The poetic intensities of love are outside his scope, and he therefore takes refuge in sentimentalism, though somewhat more subtly, no doubt, than his own Sentimental Tommy. The lover whose romance has poetic quality transmutes by a sovereign alchemy the baser metal of fleshly desire to pure gold; but the desire is not destroyed: it never can be. The sentimentalist, with his thinner and weaker emotions, is ashamed of that element of desire which his lesser love lacks strength to interfuse. So he tries hard to pretend it is not there; he lies to himself about it, and the whole tissue of his feeling is tainted by the morbid blight of this pretence. Lack of poetic strength is the original cause.

Nor is this lack, in Barrie, any the less evident when we turn from the "love-interest" in his work to those more fantastic and whimsical excursions which some regard as providing his chief claim to recognition. How little of the glamour of Celtic fairyland has the sugar-sweet magic of this Lowland Scot! Peter Pan is no Ariel: he can wake not even the most distant echo of that fairy music that sounds from the yellow sands of an island veritably enchanted. "Pretty touches," it is true, abound in Peter Pan, and children will probably always like the play because of the pirates, but of beauty it has no single touch, no single thrill. Poetry and prettiness—a gulf lies in between; and think of Mary Rose—Mary Rose, not for remembrance! Only the poet can be fantastic without being absurd. Contrast, with Barrie, Walter de la Mare.

But the author of Mary Rose and Peter Pan is not a negligible figure. He serves a purpose. In a rather curious and quite illuminating way he shows what comes of that kind of fancy that does not strike deep roots in heart or head. He shows us make-believe and whimsy falling just short of imagination, sentiment just missing romance, humour ranging just outside the arena of laughing philosophy. He has never felt passion, nor poetry's "wand-like touch," and so, for all his success, he fails; fails, in all his pleasantness and prettiness, in all his sterile charm.

THREE POEMS

BY WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

I

The farmer in deep thought
is pacing through the rain
among his blank fields, with
hands in pockets,
in his head
the harvest already planted.
A cold wind ruffles the water
among the browned weeds.
On all sides
the world rolls coldly away:
black orchards
darkened by the March clouds—
leaving room for thought.
Down past the brushwood
bristling by
the rainsluiced wagon-road
looms the artist figure of
the farmer—composing
—antagonist.

II

Our orchestra
is the cat's meow

Banjo jazz
with a nickle-plated

amplifier to
soothe

the savage beast—
Get the rhythm

That sheet stuff
's a lot a cheese

Man
gimme the key

and lemme loose—
I make 'em crazy

with my harmonies—
Shoot it Jimmy

Nobody
Nobody else

but me—
They can't copy it

III

The crowd at the ball game
is moved uniformly

by a spirit of uselessness
which delights them—

all the exciting detail
of the chase

and the escape, the error
the flash of genius—

all to no end save beauty
the eternal—

THREE POEMS

So in detail they, the crowd,
are beautiful

for this
to be warned against

saluted and defied—
It is alive, venomous

it smiles grimly
its words cut—

The flashy female with her
mother, gets it—

The Jew gets it straight—it
is deadly, terrifying—

It is the Inquisition, the
Revolution

It is beauty itself
that lives

day by day in them
idly—

This is
the power of their faces

It is summer, it is the solstice
the crowd is

cheering, the crowd is laughing
in detail

permanently, seriously
without thought



A DRAWING. BY CARL SPRINCHORN



A DRAWING. BY CARL SPRINCHORN





A DRAWING. BY CARL SPRINCHORN

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PARIS LETTER

July, 1923

THIS is my first letter to the readers of THE DIAL: in a way my credential letter. I have composed it myself so I can have no assurance in presenting it, certainly not the assurance, common in such cases, of knowing that though the letter be sealed it speaks well of the bearer.

It is a real effort for me because I write only to indifferent people and almost never to my friends (friends being those with whom you do not have to keep up relations because you know you can count on them). And to-day, when autographs fetch such high prices at auction, a writer owes it to himself to write still less, so as not to lower the rate.

In other days it took a Parisian to speak competently of Paris. But we are no longer in the Paris of the past; undoubtedly that is why the task is now confided to one who has lived so much abroad that the description of his birthplace is exoticism. However, Paris has itself become so much a stranger to its proper genius that I find myself more at home than I should after long absences. Where is the labyrinth of the old streets of the Latin Quarter? Where are the great gardens destroyed by the Boulevard Raspail? Where is the gentle slope of the Champs-Élysées without palaces, without dressmakers with Russian names, where the first modern shop, an automobile agency, installed itself, to the scandal of the quarter, at the corner of the rue Marbeuf where I was born? A Paris so delicate, so unadacious, gay in the evening with its shops open late and its cafés regretfully closing at two in the morning—Paris of 1895, of Sarah Bernhardt and of Robert de Montesquiou. I see myself again in the rented coupé (*de l'Épatant*) which took me as a child down the Boulevard Pereire to the *hôtel* of "Madame Sarah." In a *salon* which smelled of lilacs I see again that fine profile painted by Bastien-Lepage, the body already heavy with its fifty years, lying on the skin of some wild animal, surrounded with flowers. As I came in, dressed in a black velvet suit, and frightened because of the lions which, they told me, roamed the house, Sarah

sat up and in the voice which was then still a caress, the luminous, ardent voice, trembling like a violin (in the last fifteen years it was spoiled and seemed to be emitted by a tragic phonograph) she cried out, "There's Morand's boy! How like his father he looks!"

She had the trick of pronouncing my name nasally—it was theatrical and at the same time expressed the deep friendship she had for my father—which gave me a physical pleasure I shall not forget. It was the time of MacNab, of the songs of the Chat Noir. I had been taught the *Pendu de la Forêt de St Germain* and the *Fiacre*—the *fiacre* with the coachman in yellow and in black—that song which, says Tzara, is like a print by Toulouse-Lautrec. I got up on a gilt chair and sang and Sarah kissed me and stuffed me with *bonbons* which I ate with one eye squinting at the door where the lion would come in.

But I see that I am writing my memoirs, which is quite ridiculous. It is only out of superstition that I set at the head of this first letter the name of her who was always good to me and who, under a beautiful sun, a short time ago, left us, surrounded by the tired, intelligent faces which are the ornaments of the streets of Paris and preceded by five carriages of the most beautiful flowers. Sarah is dead and her throne remains vacant. Montesquiou is dead—this poet who would have gone down to posterity even if he had issued only one book—and his title dies with him. Nothing replaces what is dying to-day. After their death they leave us their outline, the hollow mould which no one fills; and this is necessary to make us feel that there is nothing in common between their time and ours. It requires the genius of Marcel Proust to pass over the chasms which divide the generations and master the years. (He should be called "The Master of Time.") Proust, however, was fully of their time; his letters to Montesquiou which, with a pang at the heart, all Paris saw the other day before they were put on sale and gathered up by the pious hands of his brother—these letters were of that period and of no other. Those of Proust are full of kindness and submissive respect (too submissive say those who do not understand that it was this excess of humility which, by reaction, gave the character of de Charlus all its virulence); those of Montesquiou are full of vain and arrogant writing, and are sustained only by the extreme culture of his malice and the very excess of his artifice. In this connexion I want to repeat a little known anecdote which Proust told me less than a year ago and which is

pretty because it marks the malice of Montesquiou as worthy of Saint-Simon. Montesquiou was related to the Marquise de B. who for years surrounded him with admiration and solicitude. Every day she wrote to him, opening her heart and seeking for affection and spiritual aid. The day after the death of the poet his secretary presented himself before the marquise and told her that in accordance with the last wishes of the deceased, he was handing over a package to Madame la Marquise. . . . And this packet contained, carefully filed, all the letters written in many years by her to Montesquiou, *and not a single one of them had ever been opened by him*. I can still see my poor Marcel Proust in the depths of his copper bed, transported with admiration for this posthumous malice.

We must quit these Parisians for, even in Paris, Europe is the fashion. Those of us who have been "good Europeans" since their youth, can only rejoice at this. Later we will leave behind "*L'Europe aux anciens parapets*" as Rimbaud said, and become cosmopolitan—it will happen sooner than we think—and after that it will only remain for us to become human, which will not be the easiest thing in the world. To-day the fortifications of Paris are razed and Paris is justly called a free city. "A Frenchman really has no need to put his nose out of doors" Kipling said to me once—he who never had to regret having put his nose, with the golden spectacles, out of doors. Not even Cocteau—Cocteau the Parisian, as Picabia calls him—who declares that he has taken root in the asphalt, comparing himself to a chestnut tree on the boulevards, fails to regard the far horizon with his restless and piercing eye. Europe is in the headlines. After *L'Europe Nouvelle*, we have *La Revue Européenne*, edited by Valéry Larbaud, Jaloux, Germain, Soupault—names inspiring confidence; there is Europe where we find Vildrac, Arcos, Duhamel, and others. In *Patrie Européenne* Arcos is tracing, in the style of Whitman, a programme to which one is bound to subscribe. The apostle of nationalism, Maurice Barrès himself, presided recently at a banquet and scrutinizing the horizon announced "a literature having the feeling of a greater world and of countries spread over the face of the globe." It must rejoice us to see a kind of *union sacrée* forming in France on these questions—a thing which appeared distant enough on the morrow of the Peace.

In its forms the modern spirit still gives offence. Publicity, cer-

tainly, has never been a French science (but it is a science all the same). No doubt this is due to the existence of a well-informed public opinion, at least in literature, and to the abuses we practise with words. In the face of literary *réclame* our critics feel injured, as do our readers, too, who with each book they buy, purchase also the precious right to exercise their private criticism—which the French, a jealous people, prefer to all other sports. Symposia are being held on the question “whether it is legitimate to exploit works of the mind exactly like commercial products”—which will cause a smile in the United States. There is room for pleasure in seeing how the taste for letters has spread in France in three years. Everywhere publishers are opening book shops, and newspapers devoted exclusively to literature (like *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*) are established; new literary *salons* are opening every day (we must return to that interesting topic another time) manuals of the history of literature and anthologies come from every press; Hachette has a *Histoire de la Littérature*, and Larousse another; Crès publishes a manual by Lalou; there is the *Vingt-cinq Ans de Littérature*, by Montfort, published by Saint Andréa. Gus Bofa, in a pamphlet sold out the moment it appeared, has synthesized in satiric phrases the impressions left on him by the authors he has read. Finally the number of literary prizes has reached unheard of heights. They grow in number and in importance. The season 1922-23 will have seen ten great prizes and some forty minor ones awarded. Tired of being judged by literary men, the painters have decided to judge them in turn and to give a prize. This morning, lunching with some friends, we thought of founding a prize by novelists for the best critic, not to mention another prize to be given by all those who have received prizes in the preceding twelvemonth—all leading to the happy day when there will be more prizes than books.

In the end the rage will pass and the only prizes left will be those awarded by juries which have not deceived their publics. We hope that the New World Prize (*Prix du Nouveau Monde*) established by Mrs Keep of New York, and intended to reveal a young writer of the French language to the United States, will be one of those which will remain. Larbaud, Giraudoux, Cocteau, Max Jacob, Lacretelle, Bernard Faÿ, and myself will award it some time this month. Giraudoux recently said that “the one who wins a prize captures the interest of people; but sympathy goes to those who don’t.” We hope for one and the other for our candidate.

An exposition of Belgian art has just opened at the Tuileries. We can revisit the Van Eycks from Ghent, Adam and Eve returned from farther away than Paradise, the Angelic Music, the Memlings from Bruges, and that prodigious Pietà of Van der Weyden which is one of the great masterpieces of Flemish art, lent by the King of Spain; it seemed to me less effective than in the sombre granite hall of the Escorial. The Vienna Breughels were also expected, but it seems that the curator of the museum who is—if I may use the word in connexion with crowns—paid to know whether it is best to let pictures travel or not, opposed their coming to a country where the currency is less depreciated. The only subject of conversation at the exhibition was the quarrel preferred by a young novelist, Henri Béraud, laureate of the Goncourt Prize, against André Gide, Jules Romains, and certain other writers for the *Nouvelle Revue Française* whom he accuses of being tiresome.

The reaction marked by the creation of the N. R. F. about 1908 is well known. Rimbaud, Claudel, Gide, Romains—all the authors whom the old *Mercure de France* had made known to the public without imposing them or making them absolutely the masters for the younger generation, found a medium there in which they could exercise in full function an influence which now—years later—is showing its effects. The thing was not accomplished without excesses on the other side, a dogmatism whose intensity was perilously near intolerance, and a calvinist spirit even in paganism which was not made to please everybody. For us who came late to the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, when the influence of Gide was diminishing and yielding to the more human and less literary influence of Proust, such a quarrel has no meaning; it is full of personal rancour and seems destined to a short hold on our attention.

With the permission of those who have declared this little war against the "white covers" (as the authors of the N. R. F. are called) I am going to finish this letter by mentioning several recent volumes, among which there are three from the N. R. F. First, *Filibuth ou la Montre en Or*, an exquisite novel by Max Jacob. I know that the talent of Max Jacob is rather inaccessible and that his humour is not of a kind to be spontaneously relished by foreigners. But mount the steps of the little middle-class houses in Montmartre, look into the small shops where through the windows paned with tissue-paper you can see the rue Ravignan, listen to the rich speech rendered with incredible precision, a veritable science of the

conversation of *concierges* which is philological on one side and lyric on the other—and you may be sure of being well rewarded. So many Americans risk a stroke in mid-July by climbing up the steep of the Basilica and—what is more serious—run the risk of a bad dinner on the Place du Tertre in order to see Paris in her grey and violet mists; why not traverse the charming pages of Max Jacob and find it there, without trouble?

M Abel Hermant has just issued the first two volumes of a series entitled *Le Cycle de Lord Chelsea*. It is not, be assured, a Wagnerian Ring. *Le Suborneur, le Loyal Serviteur* are charming and easy narrations, pursued with the impertinent grace of a master and held together by the personality of Lord Chelsea. Here we find again the type—perverse, ironic, cultivated, and in a literary way demoniac—which tradition has perpetuated with us since the eighteenth century, coming through the Goncourts. Is it necessary for me to note the novel of a beginning writer of twenty—*Le Diable au Corps*, by Raymond Radiguet¹? His publisher, I should fancy, has taken good care that this author should become known to the American public. But I would like to say how much—once your attention is attracted to the book—it is worth while. This story of the love of a boy and a woman whose husband is at the front is done with a definite grace, a solid writing, without external effects, and the difficult and hardly pleasing subject hides its harshness in the most redoubtable and charming ingenuities.

Louis Aragon, whose talent is known to the readers of *THE DIAL*, has published *Les Aventures de Télémaque* in which the gods frequently take on strange appearances to come and visit us. In *Malice*, MacOrlan, an alert Latin, master of his nerves and of his talent, isn't abashed to seize his phantoms by their feet; he plays them a thousand tricks, takes off their shrouds, and in the morning we remain alone, with a beautiful book in our hands.

Joseph Delteil, a new name, gives us his first novel, *Sur la Fleuve Amour*, which presages an endowed and powerful novelist afraid of none of our recent liberties.

You must not believe that my stopping here means that the basket is empty. But I think that with these books your diversion is assured for a few weeks; and I hope that this letter with its news will arrive where it should—in the bosom of faithful friends.

PAUL MORAND

¹Awarded the *Nouveau Monde* prize for this year.

DUBLIN LETTER

July, 1923

I SOMETIMES think that it is very nice of American readers to be interested in Irish literature. The volume of that literature is not great, especially when we do not reckon some big-selling Irish authors as contributors to it. If mingled with a group of the writers of other nations, Irish writers would not at once be recognized by their towering stature and noble appearance. Nevertheless, Mr Yeats, A. E., Mr James Stephens, Mr Colum, even Mr Joyce, and some others, if their countenances be closely scrutinized, betray a certain proud consciousness of belonging to a secret order, with incommunicable beliefs and traditions. A general air of distinction may be claimed for Irish literature, so consciously maintained that when any of its writers, however fresh and vigorous, shows signs of popularity on railway book-stalls, he begins to lose caste and ceases to be spoken of in that inner circle from which proceeds his true reward of recognition. An Irish R. L. Stevenson, for example, or Sir James Barrie, would have been of little account in Ireland. And the strong point of Irish literature has hitherto been that this distinction was not due to the jealousy of a small clique, such as is found in other literary centres, but to the exacting requirement of the Irish public itself that Irish authors should be true and disinterested interpreters of Irish nationality. But this was perhaps only while literature was the outlet to which Irish nationality was restricted for its manifestation. *O fortunati nimium, sua si bona norint!* What would the poets and artists of other lands not give to belong to a country in which literature and art are the instrument of national expression? It is true that this privileged status of the poet in Ireland rested on the supposition of a grievous political wrong, namely the subordination of the political interests of Ireland to those of Great Britain; just as the awful dignity of the Hebrew prophets and poets rested on the fact of expatriation and oppression. But this was in itself a powerful advantage, inasmuch as the very squalors of Irish politics were redeemed under the strong light—one might almost say the lime-light—of idealism

which irradiated them, and attracted the sympathetic attention of all the world. What the future held for a literature so circumstanced it would now be idle to speculate. History presents one illustrious instance of a sacred symbolism founded on the historical fact of expatriation and oppression. Would Irish literature thus have become symbolic and in a manner sacred? Such a development was certainly not uncongenial to the literary speculations of A. E. and Mr W. B. Yeats, who have more than once dwelt on the saying that it is the problem of literature to produce a sacred book. As it turned out, however, Mr Yeats and A. E. had not yet more than reached middle age when minatory murmurs began to be heard in that new Ireland which had begun to tread their generation down. The disturbances in the Abbey Theatre during the first performances of Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* were a warning of the arrival of a new generation which rejected symbolism, both in politics and poetry; and in the Easter week of 1916, a little band of poets, armed with guns, inaugurated that movement for the immediate realization of all ideals which has since been crowned with a success almost disconcerting to those who have inherited responsibility for it.

Irish literature, then, appears to have forfeited the enjoyment of those conditions in which it might have dreamed of producing a sacred book—unless, indeed, it has inadvertently produced one in Mr Joyce's *Ulysses*. The ironic mood in which that work is conceived might seem a little unholy, but for the matter of that, irony is now the very accent of prophecy. Mr Joyce's irony, however—unlike that of the humorous hot-gospellers Shaw and Chesterton—conveys no prophetic burthen: the coin of his wit has the same stamp on both sides. Even his master Rabelais ranks among the "pioneers of education," but Mr Joyce has achieved a work so purged of all philanthropic intention and so purely Mephistophelean, that one may almost say of it that it has every characteristic of a masterpiece except a *raison d'être*. Conflagration is the order of the day in Ireland; and perhaps Mr Joyce, after all, has some spiritual kinship with the late destroyer of our archives, Roderic O'Connor; for *Ulysses* is a bonfire, glorious while it lasts, of all the pious illusions of provincial and Catholic Ireland. . . . But I am by no means sure that it is the function of literature to produce a sacred book, or that any nation need envy the Hebrews those cir-

cumstances which gave to all their history a unique symbolic value. Ireland, at all events, is not the nation to make a martyr of itself.

Quite independently of its experiences as an oppressed nationality, however, mediaeval Ireland, or more correctly Gaeldom, did conceive one fruitful idea which might have led, if not to a sacred book, at least to the formulation in imaginative literature of a permanent human problem. This was the idea—which arose apparently by accident in the popular mind—of impersonating the spirit of paganism and the spirit of Christianity in the figures of Oisín and Saint Patrick, and of engaging them in dramatic dialogue. If Ireland, later on, had admitted the spirit of the Renaissance, we can hardly doubt that some literary or dramatic elaboration of this theme would have been attempted: it is one which might have attracted Marlowe or Calderon if they had heard of it. Or dare we compare the setting of this dialogue—which contains the rudiments of a profound philosophical inquiry—amid the wild adventures of the Fenians, with that of the sacred episode of the *Mahābhārata*, in which Arjuna and Krishna hold converse in the space between the hosts drawn up for battle? A. E. always insists that there is a likeness between the Hindu and the Irish mythologies, but I am afraid the Irish temperament was always "out for fun," and one shrinks from trying to conceive what would have become of the theme of the *Bhagavad Gita* in the world of Gaelic imagination. What could Krishna himself have thought of by way of reply to the old Gaelic hero?—

"O Patrick of the crooked crozier, who makest me that impertinent answer, thy crozier would be in atoms were Oscar present.

"Were my son Oscar and God hand to hand on Knock na-veen, if I saw my son down, it is then I would say that God was a strong man.

"How could it be that God and his clerics could be better men than Finn, the chief king of the Fenians, the generous one who was without blemish?"

In these dramatic dialogues it was clearly Oisín who had the good will of the Irish auditors, and the poets of the Celtic Renaissance are now even disposed to make Saint Patrick the burlesque figure. Probably the most notable attempt to treat the subject in

terms of modern art and thought is a book which has just broken the silence of Irish literature, *The Return of the Hero*, by "Michael Ireland." The name of the author somehow sets one thinking of "Anatole France," and one is in fact reminded of Anatole France by certain characteristics of the book, as well as of Algernon Blackwood, Mark Twain, and the *Bhagavad Gita*: finally, however, one settles down to thinking of no one else but Mr James Stephens. A writer of the modern Irish school was bound to reverse the intention of the legend—in which it was understood that the future, both in this world and the next, belonged to Saint Patrick—and to make Oisín even dialectically the conqueror; and this was permissible, so long as the issue lay in dialectic. But one begins at last to find it a little unfair that while the Saint is restricted to the theological formulae of his own period, his antagonist is free to range far into the future, and to confound Saint Patrick with the oracles of Blake and Nietzsche. If the book is by Mr Stephens—I must not assume this—it seems almost regrettable that this debate was not left as an inconclusive episode in his rendering of the whole cycle of Irish mythology, and that he was tempted to convert it into a story, with an appropriate ending secured by magical transformations akin to those practised by Mr Algernon Blackwood.

When Irish literature, in Miltonic language, "reassembles its afflicted powers," it will find a good many gaps in its ranks: not so much that our poets, in any considerable number, have been executed, assassinated, or banished, as that a fell disillusionment has seized upon many Irishmen with respect to the realization of long-cherished ideals, and in particular the ideal of a Gaelic-speaking Ireland. Ireland being no longer a country in which it is permitted to dream dreams, but one in which it is pre-eminently necessary to circumvent British trade-competition by hard work, the Gaelic idealists, who really flourished best under provincial conditions, are looking for a way of escape, and some of them, if they are allowed to emigrate, may even nurse the old ideals in other lands. The legitimate outlet of this dissatisfaction will no doubt be in the formation of a constitutional party representing these ideals, and it remains to be seen whether this party will represent an Ireland which is still the main source of literature. Meanwhile that manner of life which seemed threatened with extinction by Sinn Féin appears likely enough to reassert itself and to continue under trans-

formed conditions: the life of the "gentry," represented by a series of conscientious novelists from Miss Edgeworth to Miss Somerville. In certain districts of the West of England, in France, Italy, Germany, are gathered little groups of Anglo-Irish *émigrés*, most of them longing to come back, and already indeed beginning to do so. They are attracted back to Ireland, partly by patriotism, partly by a belief prevalent amongst them that Ireland is socially a conservative community.

We await a portent—the transformation of Irish literature. In 1913 Mr Yeats wrote a poem with the burden "Romantic Ireland's dead and gone," in which he was generally understood to take leave of Irish nationalism; but in 1916 Romantic Ireland had reasserted itself with a vengeance, and Mr Yeats published a kind of palinode with the refrain, "A terrible beauty is born!" Mr Yeats has not taken anything like A. E.'s share in bringing into being the Free State, but he has done what he could for it—and that is a good deal—by coming over to live in it and by serving in the Senate; and the other day he made a speech in which he urged the need of building up, in place of the old idealism, the "idealism of labour and of thought." Can we conceive Mr Yeats, like an Irish d'Annunzio, casting away his dreamer's cloak and chanting the songs of labour? Does a loftier destiny await Ireland than to be the dreamer amongst the nations? The intense Italian temperament, which reduces social and spiritual problems to clear alternatives, is certainly not ours. There is a dimness and indistinctness of outline in all our prospects, and we have perhaps secured the form of nationality before we have made quite sure of the reality.

JOHN EGLINTON

BOOK REVIEWS

SHORTER AND BETTER STORIES

O. HENRY MEMORIAL AWARD PRIZE STORIES OF 1922. *Chosen by the Society of Arts and Sciences. Introduction by Blanche Colton Williams. 12mo. 260 pages. Doubleday, Page and Company. \$1.90.*

THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF 1922. *Edited by Edward J. O'Brien. 12mo. 389 pages. Small, Maynard and Company. \$2.*

THE ADVANCE OF THE AMERICAN SHORT STORY. *By Edward J. O'Brien. 12mo. 302 pages. Dodd, Mead and Company. \$2.*

AS WE ARE. *Stories of Here and Now. Collected by Walter B. Pitkin. 12mo. 312 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.*

THE fatuity of The Society of Arts and Sciences must be purely occasional, like an annual dinner, for one never hears of it except in connexion with the most ridiculous volume of short stories issued in association with the name of O. Henry. If it is actually a society which concerns itself in any way with arts and sciences, it ought promptly to separate itself, in the minds of intelligent people, from this yearly exhibition of commercialism and stupidity; if it exists only for the purpose of issuing this book, and awarding the prizes which go with it, the name is a contravention of commercial honesty. I leave the solution of the dilemma to the Society, whichever it is.

The more prizes it has, the more fatuous the Committee becomes. This year they had a special prize for the best story under three thousand words. (I must not be unjust, for "at first the Committee set the outside limit for the very brief story at 2,500 words. Later they rescinded their action in establishing that limit and

made it 3,000." O magnanimous Committee! O Committee which is aware that aesthetically 2,500 is as naught, whereas 3,000 is as 3,000! O God, as I wrote in reviewing their previous volume, O Montreal! O Committee which prefers "those narratives reflective of life"! I have taken the quite unnecessary pains to read the stories in their volume—unnecessary because the introduction is quite enough, and more interesting. Some are not bad stories; most are. I suppose Mr Cobb's being the worst of even their lot, naturally won the prize. Most of the stories are dull, spiritually banal, intellectually vulgar, uninteresting in plot, weak in characterization, shabbily written—and not good interesting narratives. I cannot go on in decent language about the product before me, and I do not think it is required of me to make the exceptions specific. The O. Henry Memorial Award has been going on long enough for any self-respecting author to know better than to allow his work to appear in the annual volume. As for the introduction, I urge everyone to read it, for everything that is wrong and depressing in the American story is explained there—generally as everything that's right and entertaining. In addition to a Credo, the introduction provides a reasoned catalogue of the stories contained in the volume, and critical reasons for the rejection of others. You will learn that "only one dog story was considered for inclusion" and that Mr Beer has "successfully fictionized the Yankee family at home," that "a story otherwise excellent may fail to convince" (which it happens is written in connexion with one of the worst stories published during the year, not, however, included in this series) and that another story seemed "deftly to incorporate an episode in the life of Mark Twain. But the specialist in slang wrote roundly . . . 'Nope'" and so damned it. Here are specimen fragments of the Credo:

"I believe that every good story is based upon a struggle, not upon a tableau or picture. I admit (*sic*) that a complication enlarges and enriches the primary struggle.

"I believe in the aids of suspense, of clues, of dramatic forecast, of surprise and all the other arts at the story teller's command.

"I believe that an underlying truth, which is not propaganda or didacticism, exists at the basis of every good story.

"I believe that every story which lives, even momentarily, exists

through a triangle of forces: the author's afflatus conveyed through the characters and firing the reader. [The lady believes in mixing them up, too, one gathers.]

"I believe that if a story lives beyond three score hours and ten it must be possessed of the intangible quality known as style."

In all honour, what can you expect after these so deeply meditated, so profoundly silly observations?

I follow Mr O'Brien at a rather long distance, for if I understand him at all, he is interested chiefly in ideas, with which the art of fiction has little enough to do. Both his selection and his book on the progress of the short story indicate his deep concern with ideas, or as he puts it with "realizing a new form of life." Unlike the editors of the O. Henry volume, Mr O'Brien has no faculty for always missing good stories, and he publishes fewer bad ones. I dislike some of his selections intensely and it seems to me that some of his best choices do little to strengthen his argument. Above all I congratulate him on taking a tip from me—in choosing Ring Lardner's beautiful story, *The Golden Honeymoon*. To congratulate him on not missing the stories he has chosen from *THE DIAL* would be as superfluous as to condemn him for including one of the trickiest and cheapest of F. Scott Fitzgerald's "output." Mr O'Brien has authority; he knows whom to encourage. But there are moments when he seems not to know what in them needs encouragement most.

The fourth of these books is the beginning of mass-production. It represents "A first attempt of the writers to combine informally in drawing scenes from one field of American life." That is to say, Professor Pitkin set a theme, and a dozen writers used it. The theme seems to be the class-struggle, not narrowly conceived as between capital and labour, but as between any two classes. Almost all the stories are dull. "They are life drawings, some done in the rough, others subtly refined, a few rather minutely elaborated with interpretation. At least one principal character in each story is real . . . several of the stories are not fiction but biography . . . and one of them is pure history." Professor Pitkin contributes quite a discussion, a defence of realism, of the disagreeable, conceived wholly as an answer to the hypothetical complaint about there being so much tragedy in real life. In such a connexion one

doesn't expect and one doesn't get a glimmer. That there obviously isn't enough tragedy in real life to make it noble, that people have begun to lose all sense of the tragic, and that the argument he produces has nothing to do with fiction—these things the reader will be aware of the moment he begins to read the stories themselves. A low conception of art is a fairly certain sign of a low understanding of life. It is not surprising to read the confused and commonplace remarks which Professor Pitkin makes about science, about the creative mind, about the college graduate of to-day who "knows more" than Aristotle did—as if any one ever cared for how much Aristotle knew. But on the whole the intrusion of that great name is apt. For most of the plays he knew and wrote about were also on "given themes"—exactly in the sense of "*donnée*"—and they were works of art and had reference to contemporary life, and to life itself.¹

GILBERT SELDES

¹ It is as well not to encourage misconception. *THE DIAL* will offer, presently, a collection of stories from its pages, under the imprint of Alfred A. Knopf. So those who feel that my objections to other stories are chiefly due to the fact that they haven't appeared in *THE DIAL* can add that to their justification. The objections remain; and *Stories From The Dial* will only enforce their validity. They will, additionally, be good stories.

MR HOUSMAN'S LAST POEMS

LAST POEMS. *By A. E. Housman. 12mo. 79 pages.*
Henry Holt and Company. \$1.50.

LAYING down this little volume, as bitter as it is wistful and as gentle and strong to break futile things as a man's strength on a twig, one muses back to its predecessor of nearly thirty years ago. How A Shropshire Lad sang out honestly from gallows' heights, how it gave sadness and the beauty of the countryside a new hardness, and how, beside its clear, silver, inexorable voice all the organ music of the aesthetes quickly hushed into dead velvet—all this we remember. *Last Poems* speaks with a slightly new accent, while telling of the same spiritual country. The former volume drew exact lines on the land and noted carefully the passionate steps of puppets, each on his given line, each to his useless point. In *Last Poems* there is less drama, less interested amusement in the process, a more explicit concern with the journey's end. Where A Shropshire Lad was athletically grim and waved its pessimistic formula with a blitheness that was not all mockery, the later poems reflect and mutter and sigh. 'Tis the same tale, but there's a different telling on't. And so, while our memory of the more significant book is as of a clear view in the cool, green morning, we come out of its successor's pages with eyes half-closed and with a dreaminess of sunset.

The contrast finds illustration within the covers of the book itself, for some of it is pure Shropshire Lad, notably *Eight O'clock*:

"He stood, and heard the steeple
Sprinkle the quarters on the morning town.
One, two, three, four, to market-place and people
It tossed them down.

Strapped, noosed, nighing his hour,
He stood and counted them and cursed his luck;
And then the clock collected in the tower
Its strength, and struck."

This is as tart and unwinking as you will, with all of its philosophy carefully held down in the implications. There are no remarks, there is no squeal. Its futility is not a meditated thing, rather fate's impertinence thrust into the impatience and the lust of life, for of the hours we are told that he "counted them and cursed his luck." They are still worth the counting. Futility has not yet sunk into the heart of man. Elsewhere we are told:

"Could man be drunk forever
With liquor, love, or fights,
Lief should I rouse at morning
And lief lie down of nights.

But men at whiles are sober
And think by fits and starts,
And if they think, they fasten
Their hands upon their hearts."

Explicit futility, a nicely cherished disgust that the poet has made over into a pessimism too sweet to smart. Such poems as this make of A Shropshire Lad a sort of protesting hillock on the smooth, verdant plain of Victorian-Georgian poesy. The "continuous excitement" of 1895 that Mr Housman speaks of in his preface had lifted him safely above the plain. He walks the plain now, not in the dead-earnest fashion of a real Victorian-Georgian, to be sure, rather with a foreign grace, with a reserve which somehow fails to realize the company he is in. We even find stratified poems, poems in which an honest workmanship of any perfectly honest squire ("Oh, to the bed of ocean, To Africk and to Ind") supports (or undermines) another layer ("And the dead call the dying And finger at the doors").

A Shropshire Lad had in much of its imagery something cold, sharp, precipitated, something of the momentaneous power that we attribute to an unexpected rustle in dead leaves. There is less of this quality in Last Poems, but it is present. The first poem is full of it:

"The sun is down and drinks away
From air and land the lees of day,"

"The long cloud and the single pine
Sentinel the ending line,"

"Oh lad, I fear that yon's the sea
Where they fished for you and me."

These strangenesses are not awkward, not sought. They have more suddenness than ingenuity; they suggest omens, possibly, rather than pictures. Even the slightly euphuistic passages ring true, such as:

"And let not yet the swimmer leave
His clothes upon the sands of eve."

It is ungracious and pedagogical to contrast, to mark off epochs. Yet a brief glance at our current exasperation, the better to fix Mr Housman for our envy, a cordial good-bye to what is no longer strictly ours, and a vain question will not be thought too heavy a load of analysis. For, having laid down the Last Poems and mused of the lad, we find ourselves automatically closing the little book—and the manner of its closing is a symbol—not curtly, with a businesslike indifference, nor too lingeringly, with many browsings back and forth between the reluctantly closing covers, but slowly and decisively. We should like to feel ourselves more excitedly in the midst of Mr Housman's work, but it will not go. A truth that we nearly hate whispers to us that there is no use pretending, that these lines lilt too doggedly and too sweetly to fall in quite with our more exigent, half-undiscovered harmonies, that many of the magic turns catch us cruelly absent-minded. And, most disappointing of all, for we are a little disappointed, and vexed at being so, we cannot seem to pool Mr Housman's pessimism with our own. We seem to feel that our zero does not equate with his, that each has a different mathematical "sense" or tendency.

We discover, as we probe into our puzzling disaccord, that we already love the Shropshire lad as we love our Coleridge and our Blake and begin to divine that we were a little hasty in dating our modern drift from Mr Housman's first volume. Its flare and its protest were a psychological, a temperamental, phenomenon, not a strictly cultural one. Its disillusionment was rooted in personality,

not largely in a sensing of the proximate age. Hence while Mr Housman seems to anticipate and now to join with us in our despair, he is serene and bitter where we are bitter and distraught. His cultural world was an accepted one, though he chose to deny its conscious values; our own perturbations, could they penetrate into the marrow of his bone, would not find him a sympathetic sufferer. In the larger perspective his best work is seen to be a highly personal culmination point in a poetic tradition that is thoroughly alien to us of to-day, and nothing demonstrates this more forcibly than the apparent backwash in some of the Last Poems. There is no backwash in spirit or in style, there is simply the lessened intensity that allows general, underlying cultural traits to emerge. His zero and our zero do not equate for the reason that his is personal where ours is cultural.

Finally, the vain question. Such work as Mr Housman's, admirably simple and clear, classical, as it is, once more raises the doubt as to whether we can truly be said to be expressing ourselves until our moods become less frenetic, our ideas less palpable and self-conscious, and, above all, our forms less hesitant. Our eccentricities have much interest and diagnostic value to ourselves, but should it not be possible to cabin their power in forms that are at once more gracious and less discussible? One wonders whether there is not in store for English poetry some tremendous simplification. One prays for a Heine who may give us all our mordancies, all our harmonies, and our stirrings of new life with simpler and subtler apparatus. There is room for a new Shropshire Lad.

EDWARD SAPIR

IMITATION AGAIN

PAINTER AND SPACE, OF THE THIRD DIMENSION IN GRAPHIC ART. By *Howard Russell Butler*. 8vo. 178 pages. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$4.

MR BUTLER'S writing is a confusion of pedantries. His thesis is so heavily encumbered with solemn nonsense, so highly saturated with academic ink, that the modern painter with a sense of humour might get a laugh out of it, were it not for the fact that it adds another cloud to the critical obscurity lying between the public and the creative artist. Any person of ordinary intelligence, with a fair sense of human values and a flair for art, who is looking for a little knowledge of the methods of painting, would be profanely repelled by the assemblage of irrelevant mechanics herein presented. Reasonably he would exclaim: "If this is representative of creative procedure, if this is the sort of stuff involved in the technique of construction, then art is merely a quasi-scientific plaything, ingenious perhaps, and somewhat amusing, but not worthy of serious consideration!" It is hard to be tolerant with the author of *Painter and Space*. At certain happy moments, those of us who have advocated the human value of aesthetics are inclined to feel enthusiastic over the advance of modernism—and then Mr Butler comes along and puts us out of humour, and forces us to return to the elementary stages of our efforts. It would seem that the hypothetical person of average intelligence seeking information must be led back to first principles—so let us cry out once more in unison, "Art is not imitation, but reconstruction!" We shall have need of this truth so long as books are written on the assumption that reproductive accuracy, in any of its forms, is a criterion of art.

Both Leonardo da Vinci and Aristotle were accustomed to speak of art as the imitation of nature. It would be a simple matter to annihilate that pernicious word by recasting their definitions in modern terminology; but such an adaptation becomes unnecessary when one compares Leonardo's monumental conceptions with the photographic painting of to-day, and Greek tragedy with the un-

imaginative accuracy of journalistic description. The drama of the Greeks and the plastic art of the Renaissance are obviously creative symbols and not mere records or imitations of experience—the old writers on aesthetics were less explicit in their use of terms than the psychological critics of the present time.

The completely equipped modern painter must, of course, be familiar with external nature, and to a certain extent with the laws governing it; but to attach much importance to the latter in a book devoted to structural problems is a waste of time. The study of scientific laws belongs to a relatively narrow and insignificant field of painting, a technical field which includes the chemistry of pigments, the permanence of grounds, the qualities of media, and the mechanics of intermixtures in tone and colour. What is needed just now is not a discussion of general descriptive laws—works of this character when applied to artistic activity always turn out to be pseudo-scientific and false—but a psychological inquiry into the relations between our direct perceptions of nature and the consequent aesthetic expression.

Mr Butler's conception of realism has no basis in experience; it is an old and academic set of laboratory deductions, bearing practically no connexion with our emotional contacts, and therefore of little use either to artist or layman. It is a truism that art is born only in our emotional contacts, and that it is forwarded and pushed to completion, however intellectual the processes called into play, by distinctly emotional impulses. To the author's credit it must be said that he understands pure optics; but inasmuch as this branch of science is mainly theoretical, existing only in text-books and testing rooms, his knowledge is of small service to art. It does not occur to him that the peculiarities of optical illusion are part and parcel of our daily experience, and that we build up our world by inference over and beyond them. The artist has no interest in the dead level of scientific law; he aims to give us his own world with all its special characteristics, and to him the important elements of life are the emotional deviations forming the living fibre of experience. The world that confronts us on looking out of a window is not simply an optical phenomenon; concentrate upon it for a moment and the entire range of visual sensations is dissolved in memories and a general psychic awakening absolutely inexpressible by scientific optics as resumed in the laws of perspective and the grada-

tions of colour-tones under atmospheric conditions. The simple recognition of three dimensions is almost exclusively an imposition of mind upon sensation—we construct the hollows of valleys and the thicknesses of hills by inference from a thousand points which go directly through vision into memory and imagination.

Is the artist to be only a camera, a machine to give us a fainter and less vibrant nature? Is his space to be that of one particular focus? Or is he to render what his mind has added to the scene, the personal *realization* and *reconstruction*?

Mr Butler does not completely overlook the value of the personal equation, but he commits the common academic blunder of separating it from the processes embodied in plastic composition. He does not seem to grasp the fact that our various ways of seeing things, of going up against the world, demand in our different expressions very special interpretations, and that a distorted perspective and a violently forced tonality may be not only adequate, but necessary to enhance certain emotions of depth. My own observation of painters working to attain great depth and high relief has left me with little faith in geometrical perspective, and none whatever in natural tone; I have seen the laws of both constantly violated with an increase rather than a lessening of effectiveness in achieving depth. Impressionism was essentially a tonal method, an art of values (values in the technical sense, the relative intensity of colours according to their constituent amounts of light and dark); it contained little or no drawing, and was destitute of the architectonic qualities which produce high relief; it impresses us to-day as flat—emotionally flat—and yet it is infinitely closer to the values of nature than are the profoundly recessive landscapes of Rembrandt and Rubens.

Mr Butler explains the term values with unusual clarity, but vastly exaggerates the participation of natural values in the construction of the third dimension. The logic of composition—the fundamental need for congruity—demands a balance of light and dark throughout the canvas, a distribution of tonal areas approximately equal in intensity, but entirely at variance with literal values: nature, faithfully transcribed, reveals an unduly prominent foreground and a blurred stretch of distance; and a picture thus composed is inharmonious and unconvincing. Similarly, the proportions arrived at by simple vision cannot function in any design

penetrating deeper than the surface of the canvas, for the reason that the orientation of volumes, in a truly spatial art, is fully as necessary as the placement of tones. In plain language, no intelligent painter wishes to cluster all his important forms in the foreground of his picture—an inevitable condition, if he adheres to scientific descriptions, or isolates the purely visual parts of his experience. Actually, of course, objects near the eye are more sharply defined; but if we followed this rule, there would be no rhythmical connexion between the planes of a canvas; and I have yet to see a good picture in which a pronounced orientation of light and dark is not felt throughout its whole depth.

Our emotions of colour and volume are equally applicable to things near and far; and since these emotions arise for the most part from mental constructs, they must have mental rather than visual modes of interpretation. In consequence, Cézanne's treatment of landscape is eminently justified. Pictorially, the interaction of line and mass does not always conform with correct geometrical perspective; and the most successful painter of depth is he who combines his lines and masses so that the inherent dynamism is one with the special problem of recession and relief. He is a sort of sculptor in great extensions, carving in light and shadow and colour instead of marble. Cézanne was such a painter—but the author believes that "Cézanne did nothing to aid in the rendering of the third dimension."

Mr Butler's idea that pictures should be manufactured according to the optical sensations of binocular vision is moderately interesting as a *tour de force*, but it has no place in creative work. It reduces art to the superficial mechanics of imitation; and until writers have learned that the reconstruction of our emotional experiences is a mental and not a physical process, we shall make no progress in aesthetics.

THOMAS CRAVEN

PHANTASUS

CONTEMPORARY GERMAN POETRY. *Translated by Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky. 12mo. 201 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$1.75.*

ABOUT modern German poetry, with its barbaric gravity, with its goose-step from one philosophy to another: especially about the fantastic bulk of it there is something preposterous and incredible; at least one has this feeling when reading the introduction to the anthology compiled by Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky. They write as if they were describing something imaginary. These poets they discuss, who attained "a heightened emotional tonus," who wore their "boutonnière with a difference," who wreathed "roses of cement about the brow of Berlin," obviously never existed; they were invented like Earl Roppel or the Spectric School, as a vaster hoax. In face of such description to believe in their reality demands an act of faith, and yet they can be proved by the simplest empirical laws or by their collected volumes, numerous enough to pave the highroad of their flight to Berlin, after the suppression of the revolt in Munich. The introduction to Contemporary German Poetry is exact in spite of its affectations and alembications; it defines a literature which is real but improbable.

Naturalism in Germany followed sentimentalism and was followed in turn by symbolism, mysticism, *fantaisisme*. The last of these schools was founded by Alfred Mombert, or by Arno Holz, who wrote lines of uneven length which he centred round a vertical axis, giving his poems the silhouette of a pagoda. The title of his principal work, *Phantasmus*, might be applied to the whole of contemporary German verse.

However, the period described and translated in the present volume begins earlier, toward the middle 'eighties, with the naturalism of Detlev von Liliencron. Miss Deutsch's own technique renders him admirably into English, and her lyrical versions of his friend, Dehmel, and of the mystical but straightforward poems of Rainer Maria Rilke can be praised equally. With Stefan George, chief of

the symbolists, the translators have done badly; they chose his less characteristic work and allowed the essence even of this to escape, retaining little of the original except the curious punctuation. They seem to lack sympathy for anything in the least obscure.

Liliencron, Dehmel, Rilke, George: these, such giants as they were, loom as giants among the German lyric poets of the 'nineties. Fatally, they lose most of their stature in a translation which comes at the wrong moment, in the middle of a reaction against all forms of naturalism and symbolism. It is too early or too late to judge them fairly, and certainly it is too late to grow enthusiastic over qualities which they borrowed from the French, or which a few of our own poets afterwards borrowed from the German. In translation and at this moment they can give us nothing new. The same objection should not hold against our own contemporaries, the expressionists. *Contemporary German Poetry* is a volume in two parts, of which the second is devoted to this younger group.

War rages: a nation loses its young men, starves, goes down to a defeat which is the defeat not of a nation only, but of a civilization and a philosophy; out of the general indifference or debauch the surviving poets lift their voices in a chorus which is louder, more despondent and more hopeful than any imagined chorus, and vowed more fatally to remain discordant, unfulfilled, being the celebration of a fallacy.

The fallacy has often been expressed, but nowhere so clearly as in the introduction to *Menschheitsdämmerung* (Berlin: Ernst Rowohlt Verlag) which incidentally is the most complete anthology of the expressionist school. Its editor says, explaining his choice:

"The reproach can easily be made that during the past decade many poems have been written which are more complete than these; richer, qualitatively better. But can a poetry which presents the pain and passion, the desires and longings of these years . . . can this poetry take a clean and pure shape? Must it not be as chaotic as the epoch out of whose torn and bleeding soil it rose?"

Verse composed before dinner should express no emotion other than hunger. Our epoch is incomplete; therefore its poets should strive to write incompletely, badly. Composition and style, to writers

who share this belief, are qualities which the present era should avoid. They despise art, which perhaps is fortunate for their self-respect.

The expressionist school is based on two general and contradictory theories. One of them is a sentimental communism, a revolt in favour of a new society. The other is an attempt to express the pure Self, independently of every element imposed on the poet from without; in other words it is a revolt against every form of society. The two theories are to be found existing together in many of the early romantic poets; from one point of view German expressionism is no more than a violent restatement of romanticism. It would be more exact to call it a simplification.

Man. God. Self. Brother. Cosmos. Purity. Buttocks. Revolution. Write these eight words, and perhaps a few other generalities of their nature, on separate cards and shake them in a hat. Extract them one by one and place an exclamation point after each. The recipe for making expressionist poetry is not remarkably complicated. Instead of describing the infinite diversity of the exterior world it confines itself to the soul, and souls are uniform and simple. To express the inmost Self is the narrowest of all formulas. One feels when reading *Menschheitsdämmerung*, which is the work of two dozen poets, that the whole anthology could have been written by any one of them. They are more viciously similar than the Georgians.

Despising art they can write with ease, and voluminously. Johannes Becher has published ten volumes of verse since 1914, Klemm seven since 1915; Rudolf Leonhardt, who was born in 1889, is the author of "some thirteen volumes of verse and prose and also of a tragedy." Klabund is thirty-one years old. He has published forty volumes, eight of which consist of lyric poems. He says in a brief notice: "What you know is only part of what I composed. Often the wind scattered my pages. In my many wanderings I lost the manuscripts of two dramas." Klabund, with his sententiousness, must be an acquaintance of that other poet who began a letter by saying: "Three years ago I was a dadaist. Now I am a communist." Gravely, as if the world and his own personality had been changed by his decision. Of all features of contemporary German verse this seriousness is the most incredible, except perhaps for its unimaginable volume.

Miss Deutsch and Mr Yarmolinsky translate four of those poems by Klabund which the wind failed to scatter. They print Klemm, Becher, Leonhardt, Schickele, and worse. On the other hand they omit Jakob van Hoddis, who left behind him not forty volumes, but sixteen brief poems, finished roughly but perfectly, remarkable for movement, for thunder, for a cruel extreme fantasy. His peculiar qualities would be hard to recapture in English, but they are worth the effort. The absence of Hasenclever is less important; he is repeated by the other expressionists. With Hans Arp the case is different. He is sometimes called the greatest living German poet, but he is also called a dadaist, which may explain his exclusion even from an anthology which is designed "to convey the mood and manner of current German verse."

Its picture of this mood and manner could hardly be just, but it is not lacking entirely in force. It includes Mombert (the "lonely cosmic tear") and Heym, whose poems have the imaginative brutality of Munich posters. It prints a single poem by Theodor Däubler and another by Alfred Lichtenstein. It translates Gottfried Benn, who believes in a return to primitive passions and who writes with particular gusto about dissections in the morgue. Evidently the translators do not fear the most brutal naturalism. On the other hand, paradoxically, they have a weakness for the decorative and are capable of prettifying passages where the original is rough and new. They avoid real novelty almost as strictly as they avoid obscurity: an attitude which, though honest, prevents their doing justice to some of the best of modern poetry.

But happily not to all. If this wind which blew his pages from the grasp of Klabund, if this providential wind arose to sweep away everything which is pompous, verbose, sentimental, or careless from contemporary German verse, there would still remain a considerable body of poetry, and it would retain a perfume of its own, a combination of fantasy with barbarity, pessimism, and culture which can be found in no other literature, and which derives neither from Whitman nor Mallarmé. The real task of Miss Deutsch and Mr Yarmolinsky was to convey this perfume, and fortunately it was strong enough to endure a translation less honest and even more fragmentary than theirs.

BRIEFER MENTION

SINBAD, by C. Kay Scott (12mo, 282 pages; Seltzer: \$2) brings to the portrayal of a type of woman rarely found in fiction the accuracy of a dictaphone record; the unsparing, truthful revelation of a voluntary confessional; the justness of widely-inclusive observation; the emotional, dramatic quality of human interest. But the book is more: it is a dynamic and artistically harmonious interpretation of a section of life. Subsidiary talents are not exploited, but, instead, are united to point the narrative. Cleverness does not interfere with wisdom; an environment lending itself easily to mere bizarreness is incisively, but passingly, criticized; passionate crises fall into place in character development. The style is exactly suited to the mood of the book; it is pliant and tense, never loose or artificial.

DOWNSTREAM, by Sigfrid Siwertz, translated from the Swedish by E. Classen (12mo, 405 pages; Knopf: \$2.50) fails in its primary duty: it does not interest. Its dulness is surprising and perverse, for the material staked out—the rise of a family to mammonish power by the sale of its soul—would seem to be a rich mine. Perhaps the reason for the failure to produce anything of value, or even of entertainment, is that totally unregenerate people like the Selambs are quite as stupid as Pollyannas. We are given their measure in the first chapters; the others are an exposition of material accretions, without corresponding internal development or decay. The downfall of the Selambs and of the book consists in their never fighting against their doom.

SOLILOQUY, by Stephen McKenna (12mo, 318 pages; Doran: \$2) ploughs a straighter furrow into the feminine psychology of its subject than did Mr McKenna's previous novel, *The Confessions of a Well-Meaning Woman*. Where that book was unfolded episodically, this one has a rounded and cumulative development; it is a more definite portrait, richer and shrewder. It lacks somewhat in perspective, however, due to the author's election of the soliloquy form. Life seen through a capital I is apt to be like a ball game surveyed through a fence; the gap is seldom as wide as the field.

CABLES OF COBWEB, by Paul Jordan-Smith (12mo, 369 pages; Lieber & Lewis: \$2) is the story of a young man who follows his rebellious concepts of freedom and equality through years of disagreeable experiences only to find them unworthy of his idealistic concentration. It is worked out with strict regard to the logical development of the hero and achieves ironic and artistic unity. The delineation of the girl, who, however, plays a minor rôle, is hesitant; the dialogue is somewhat stilted, and the sentence structure here and there twisted and awkward. But the book—which substitutes theoretic discussions for love scenes—commands unfailing interest: it is an exceptionally solid piece of work, calm, proportionate, dissenting, and skilful.

CHALLENGE, by V. Sackville-West (12mo, 297 pages; Doran: \$2) might—with a little less genuflection to Conrad—have become an even better novel than it undoubtedly is. A great deal of brilliance has gone into it; a splendid setting devised for the enactment of drama, but the central figures in the narrative—having a tragic intensity imposed upon them for which they are ill-prepared—crumple up around the edges and disclose the cardboard mounting. The author has concerned herself with a tenpenny revolution, but her style is not scaled down to it; the emotional sweep is out of proportion to the issues involved and the boundary line between idealism and quixotism is crossed—but not with impunity.

THE BURNING SPEAR, by John Galsworthy (12mo, 251 pages; Scribner: \$1.50) shows the author as a master of pointed, fantastic caricature, a realm into which his mordant dramatic comment on community problems and the occasional quiet sallies of his novels gave no perspective. The antics of John Lavendar, descendant of Don Quixote and Pickwick, the credulous victim of floridly patriotic propaganda, are staged with the skill of a Barnum, supplemented by Galsworthy's admired sense of fitness. There is much horseplay, but not the most insistent serious-mindedness could resist such stringently selected, uproarious fun.

IN DARK PLACES, by John Russell (12mo, 285 pages; Knopf: \$2.50) is a second-rate imitation of its predecessor, *Where the Pavement Ends*. The romance of the South Seas has become tediously vulgarized. Mystery has been melodramatized into clap-trap, description has run into patter, glamour has been torn into shreds of tinsel. In place of power we have an efficiency that is feeble and works far away from the mark. Mr Russell has found his pattern; now he can turn 'em out by the dozen.

PLAYS OF NEAR AND FAR, by Lord Dunsany (12mo, 245 pages; Putnam: \$1.75) shows the author a little less inclined than usual to wander to dim palaces beyond the sunset and to enter "faery lands forlorn." While the fantastic elements are not lacking, and one may find much of the gloss and shimmer with which Dunsany usually decorates his work, yet he succeeds at times in coming down almost to earth; and he is as skilful in producing an atmosphere of reality in one or two of his plays as he is in creating an effect of beautiful unreality in the others.

PUPPET PLAYS, by Alfred Kreymborg (16mo, 133 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$1.75). In his foreword to this volume, Gordon Craig hazards the opinion that these highly individualistic little dramas would act better than they read, but one who has seen some of them put to that test is inclined to the contrary view. What appears on the printed page as fanciful, bizarre, or poetic takes on a somewhat self-conscious pose across the footlights; the flavour is charming, but a bit too precious. What the author himself accurately terms "the contrapuntal ritual" of the plays is deftly indicated in the text, but difficult to catch in the theatre. Mr Kreymborg bestows his highest praise upon marionettes, for their greater fidelity to his mood and purpose.

THE SARDONIC ARM, by Maxwell Bodenheim (8vo, 58 pages; Covici-McGee: \$3.50) is written according to the formula of his other volumes: words tossed rashly about and sometimes hitting their mark, fantasy and fantastic irony, a mob of excited metaphors. Though he never or rarely imitates another poet, Bodenheim imitates his earlier verses frequently, with the result that his name is in danger of becoming the label on a package, certifying that it contains honest goods of a certain expected weight and quality. Sometimes there is a prize in the package: a metaphor of unexpected justness or the illumination of a new character. His work is sometimes careless and sometimes exhilarating; it is never mediocre.

THE POEMS OF ALICE MEYNELL (8vo, 144 pages; Scribner: \$2) contains the whole of her poetry: a gross of lyrics of which the longest barely reaches a hundred lines. Nothing she wrote was second-rate or careless. It is a shock to realize that she was the model of the whole brood of female singers who have infested the past two decades, and that her austere quatrains were the pattern followed by all the young ladies who embroider verses in the spirit with which their grandmothers made doilies. She is immensely better than any of her imitators. She has personality, a background, an undeniable and unbelievable command of English metres. There is nobody in England to-day who can write one sort of verse like Alice Meynell, but if there were he would hardly choose to write that style of verse.

GOING TO THE SUN, by Vachel Lindsay (8vo, 101 pages; Appleton: \$1.75) is a book of happy doggerel illustrated with Lindsay's own drawings, which are rather more amusing than the text and never much worse in technique. Their lines are intricately drawn, and firm; his verse is written sloppily. Flat rhymes and a vocabulary without surprises mar the expression of a fancy which is childlike and fresh at its best; at the worst it is merely childish.

PRELUDES, by John Drinkwater (12mo, 61 pages; Houghton, Mifflin: \$1.25). This series of narrative and dramatic poems is dominated by an old theme, and yet a theme perennially new—the triumph and the exaltation of love. Mr Drinkwater writes with feeling, and at times almost with passion, yet his poetry is noticeably uneven in quality; it is annoyingly interspersed with passages of prose, and gives somewhat the effect of a green landscape dotted with boulders. In tone and character his verse bears a certain resemblance to that of Edwin Arlington Robinson, but he has not Mr Robinson's tendency to tedious psychological discourses.

ROCK-FLOWER, by Jeanne Robert Foster (12mo, 118 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$1.75) contains a dedication to John Butler Yeats and verses to Michael Collins, Brancusi, the moon, Oscar Wilde, and other international figures. In addition there are Verses for Japanese Prints (four lines of decoration on a blank page); Songs to Evin, of a primitive sexual symbolism; the Celtic twilight of Winds in Wild Grass; finally, three poems in prose. The book as a whole is full of echoes, but it possesses a sort of vigorous and unobtrusive charm, without surprises.

MY THIRTY YEARS IN BASEBALL, by John J. McGraw (12mo, 265 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2). "You can beat these fellows," I told them. "I don't think there is a question about it. We have a big advantage in that they are the favorites." In this way, McGraw is supposed to have shot the drive into the Giants that won the World Series. But it is certain that his men would have laughed at such stilted language. They'll laugh or yawn when they read this book. And so will the bleachers. For by the omission of quantities of aints, hells, and hurrahs, it is inferior to the prose of ball-parks. Nor does the slangy, technical, dominant, athletic, racy personality of McGraw enter into its grammatically correct and subdued pages.

CASUAL WANDERINGS IN ECUADOR, by Blair Niles (illus., 8vo, 250 pages; Century: \$2.50) is a charming travel narrative by one who realizes that it is more blessed to receive than to retain; her book brims with impressions and doesn't bother about the statistics. As Thoreau said, "It's not worth while going round the world to count the cats in Zanzibar"; grace and intelligence score higher than the honest minutiae of consular trade reports. Here is that rare thing in narratives of travel: an absence of the spirit of the self-anointed globe trotter.

YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY, by Ralph Nevill (8vo, 285 pages; Dutton: \$5) is one of those impostures which make it seem desirable that writers and publishers form a union and work on the closed shop basis. The author's hobby is evidently collecting lists; he gives us lists of London clubs, of the food and wine served there, of hotel decorations, of women's apparel, of landmarks; prices are affixed wherever possible. The type is large, the paragraphs short, the words one-syllable. Perhaps it is long-stored knowledge he imparts: it has not mellowed into material for a book, but accumulated into matter for an almanac.

THE BOOK OF MY YOUTH, by Hermann Sudermann (8vo, 394 pages; Harper: \$2.25) follows Cournots, Björkman, and numerous others in the field of autobiography handled in the mood of fiction, and easily outdistances them all in brilliancy and artistry. Here life is looked at with sufficient detachment to make it valuable and with sufficient wit to give it relish. Sudermann is gifted with a selective wisdom which makes every incident a dramatic contribution; he sees the forces which shaped his early years in their exact significance, and in consequence his narrative has a unity and an emotional and intellectual solidarity which are as rare as they are captivating.

THINGS REMEMBERED, by Arthur Sherburne Hardy (illus., 8vo, 311 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$5) is a most tranquil book—the detached record of a career which seems never to have filled out its possible boundaries. The author says the expected things about the value of West Point training and speaks pallidly of the compensations of old age, but few of his contacts with life seem to have struck fire. As a diplomat, he served as United States minister to Persia, Greece, Roumania, Serbia, Switzerland, and Spain; his reminiscences are those of the typical American literary legate.

THE THEATRE

AMONG the summer shows, so far as I have seen them, the **FOLLIES** is the most satisfactory. **AREN'T WE ALL?** is an amusing enough little English comedy which would be more amusing if it were less good-natured. The **WINTER GARDEN** has some good comedians, but very few funny ideas. **HELEN OF TROY**, **NEW YORK**, a musical comedy by Connelly and Kaufman, is only mildly amusing in itself. The authors have tried to transplant to musical comedy the business satire of **TO THE LADIES**, but in rather an indifferent and perfunctory fashion; and they have eked out their satiric material with all the *clichés* of the machine-made show. These devices, which carry **SALLY** to triumph, leave Messrs Connelly and Kaufman flat. They have reckoned without the great principle—amply illustrated by **HELEN OF TROY**—that the stupid jokes of clever people can never hope to be so successful as the stupid jokes of stupid people. Clever people have a way of spoiling banality by betraying that they do not believe in it. They engage in it without spirit and their lack of enthusiasm usually shows. Right against a gag aimed at the boobs they will write a sarcasm intended for the intelligent, with the result that the latter are left unsatisfied while the fun has been spoiled for the former. I believe that the authors of **HELEN OF TROY** would have been more successful in having the complete courage of their convictions than in attempting to guarantee themselves against failure by dragging in all the old tricks.

The real vitality of **HELEN OF TROY** is supplied by Miss Queenie Smith, who brings delicacy as well as verve to the *rôle* of the comic second woman. A former member of the Metropolitan ballet, she has learned a singular deftness of pantomime, and a genuine aesthetic instinct to which she subordinates all she does. Her burlesque Pavlova ballet is the best I have ever seen—better even than Fannie Brice's or James Watts'—because it is graceful as well as funny. She has a gift for swift changes of mood—rather perhaps when she is dancing than when she is acting—which in its sureness and its distinction even recalls a little Yvette Guilbert. Light and shadow, awkwardness and grace flutter her tiny figure like a breeze.

One wonders if she will not be able to develop material which will enable her to appear to even better advantage.

The "new edition" of the ZIEGFELD FOLLIES is a considerable improvement on the old—in fact it is one of the very best FOLLIES I remember. The new acts which have been substituted are not only, in general, more interesting than the old, but they also fit better in the FOLLIES: in almost every case, you have a high pressure act substituted for a vague or slowly moving one. Instead of Ring Lardner's rather casual Rip Van Winkle sketch you have a terrific team of rube dancers, and for the halting drawl of Will Rogers you have the machine-like energy of Eddie Cantor. Furthermore, Ann Pennington has been added, so that, with Cantor and Gilda Gray, you have perhaps the three highest pressure performers in the city all under the same canvas. The tempo of the show is now uniform and it is the same as that of the life outside. It is New York in terms of entertainment—the expression of extreme nervous intensity to the tune of harsh complicated harmonies. When you take the subway after the theatre, it speeds you straight with a crash to your goal, like a song by Eddie Cantor; and in the roar of the nocturnal city, driven rhythmically for all its confusion, you catch hoarse echoes of Gilda Gray singing her incomparable Come Along!

One instrument in the great jazz band of New York has suddenly been silenced: Bert Savoy is dead. But the comic character he created will never be forgotten by those who saw it. When he used to come reeling on to the stage, a gigantic red-haired harlot, swaying her enormous hat, reeking with the corrosive cocktails of the West Fifties, one felt oneself in the presence of the vast vulgarity of New York incarnate and made heroic. Well, we have heard the last of Margy's wise-cracks and the thought is a genuinely sad one. Still, in the brash nights of the city, between Reisenweber's and the Montmartre, we shall sometimes be haunted by the accents of a gasping raucous voice, hard-boiled, shamefully obscene, but in a continual tremor of female excitement: "I'm so glad you asked me that, dearie! You don't know the half of it, dearie! You don't know the half of it, dearie!"

EDMUND WILSON

COMMENT

HIMSELF the winner, one had almost said victim, of one prize and judge in another, M Paul Morand refers with mocking tenderness in his first Paris Letter to the vogue of prize-giving and prize-winning which has come over France. At the same time, as M Morand mentions, the question of wholesale marketing of works of literature is being carefully scrutinized there. The two things are close; and they are both based on a misconception which we, in connexion with *THE DIAL*'s award, have been compelled often to meet. It is, simply, a misconception of the relation between money and any work of art.

Our insistence that *THE DIAL*'s award is not a prize is frequently taken to be a characteristic pedantry on our part, almost as reprehensible as the use of the preferred spelling in our pages. We can only reply that the dictionary and good usage are the pedants, not ourselves; we are using words in their accurate and accepted sense when we say that a prize is something contested for and that an award is something given. In France books and manuscripts of books are specifically entered for prizes; in America, as in the case of the Pulitzer prize, publications of various sorts come automatically within the scope of the prize and are considered by the judges. But nothing, of any nature, is ever, in any circumstance, submitted to *THE DIAL* for its award. *THE DIAL*'s award "crowns" no book, nor does it imply any moral or even aesthetic judgement of superiority. It indicates only that the recipient has done a service to letters and that, since money is required even by those who serve letters, since the payment in money is generally so inadequate when good work is concerned, *THE DIAL* is in a way adding to the earnings of a writer, diminishing, by a little, the discrepancy between his minimum requirements as a citizen in a commercial society and his earnings as an artist. We have never believed that the recipient has, or will have, done exactly two thousand dollars' worth of service to letters. We haven't the standard of measurement for such delicacy of judgement.

We dissociate ourselves utterly from the business of giving prizes, and at the same time we call the attention of our publishers

to the situation in France because the prize is an excellent method of temporary publicity, and it is possible that publishers in America will be tempted to use it freely. There are so many prizes in France, the considerations are so varied, and political and literary intrigue so constant, that among intelligent people a prize has already lost all significance. Even more. It was openly asserted in a recent case that the part-recipient of one of the newly established prizes was himself the donor of the money. Were that so, were it even a friend who "put up," the conclusions are obvious. Rich men are notoriously given to writing; and if one secretly supplies fifteen thousand dollars and is awarded five, the rest going to two shielding authors, one not only does a good deed for literature, but one gets back thirty-three and one-third per cent—and there have been financial investments in which that represents something more than cutting one's losses.

The amount of publicity which a publisher can gain in a prize of this sort would justify him annually in giving several thousand dollars to an author on his list. It would justify all publishers together in creating prizes, in furthering them when others are so kind as to supply the funds; it is suspected that the rewards are so great that subornation and intimidation have been used—as last resorts. Every publisher in France, at this moment, *must* have a prize-winner on his lists; and the awards fall so rapidly that one doesn't know whether a newspaper headline refers to literature or horse-racing. To be sure, the thing is killing itself; the wonder is how many things it will drag down with it.

The nuisance about prizes is that they imply a contest and that they are supposedly concerned with literary values. Publicity is another matter entirely. It weakly uses critical words; but the best publicity is sales. Advertise that a book is sold out and you will sell it out; advertise that the sales have reached half a million and unless the saturation point is reached, you will sell another half-million. All of this has nothing to do with literature. We suspect that the circulation of *THE DIAL* per month is twenty times as great as the circulation, if you can call it that, of Plato's Republic in all the years of its author's life. But fond as we are of *THE DIAL* we do not offer *that* fact as evidence of superiority to Plato. We are deliberately (and with some success) building up a circulation which will enable us to pay our way and to raise our rates

for contributions; we are using the methods of publicity common at this moment. It is only a question of taste whether publishers shall have "stunt" advertising or no—there are books, wares as they are called, to which the method is eminently suitable.

The danger, already envisaged in France, is in the effect upon independent criticism. A common item in foreign reviews, for example, is the "publisher's section" in which appear signed, critical reviews of books—with which the editors of the journal have nothing to do; they do, in fact, print on the last page preceding that section some note indicating that here editorial responsibility ends. These arranged-for, or bought, reviews, are not fatal; the same thing occurs all too often in the body of publications. And we ourselves have seen the results of adverse criticism in the case of books where "millions" are being spent on advertising. It is agreeable to attack a book which is becoming popular through advertising; but few critics are in such a position that they can give themselves the bad name of independence; few editors can remain permanently in command of their papers if publishers can use advertising as a weapon. As far as we know, no publisher has withdrawn advertising from *THE DIAL* on account of adverse reviews; but we know of cases elsewhere. We know that some publishers are so intent upon the immediate good that they do not understand the cumulative value of adverse criticism—if it is intelligent and honest—as a basis for confidence when favourable criticism appears. One of the most influential organs of criticism in America has praised countless thousands of books—and sold them so. We are aware of that power. But the number of individuals who are growing sceptical, and who are caring for independent intelligence, is growing. Prizes and publicity will increase that number. Perhaps that is their only function.

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